



# **WATERLOO**

BY

**ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN.**



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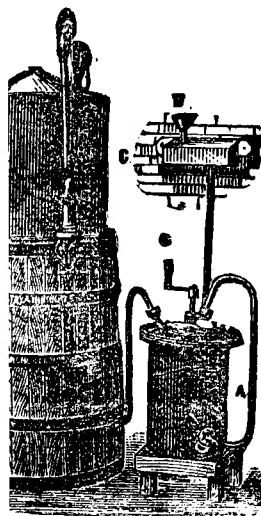
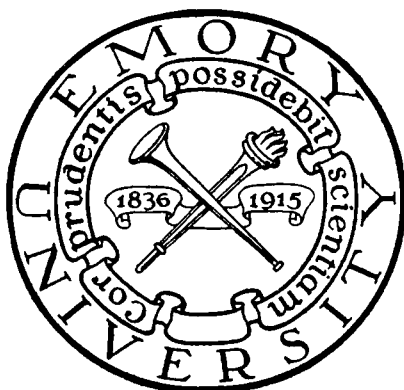
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# WATERLOO.

A SEQUEL TO "THE CONSCRIPT OF 1813."



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A SEQUEL TO  
"THE CONSCRIPT OF 1813."

BY

MM. ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN,  
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*"The Illustrious Dr. Mathéus," &c.*

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# WATERLOO.

A SEQUEL TO

## “THE CONSCRIPT OF 1813.”



### CHAPTER I.

I NEVER saw anything so joyful as the return of Louis XVIII., in 1814. It was in the spring, when the hedges, the gardens, and the orchards are in blossom. People had suffered so much misery for years and years—they had so many times feared being taken by the conscription, and never coming back again—they were so tired of all those battles, and all that glory, of those captured cannon, and the singing of *Te Deum* for victories, that the universal wish was to live in peace, to enjoy repose, and try to acquire a little property and to bring up a family honestly by work and good conduct.

Yes, everybody was glad, except the old soldiers and the fencing-masters. I remember that on the 3rd of May, when the order came to hoist the white flag on the church, the whole town was in a tremble because of the soldiers of the garrison, and that they had been obliged to give six louis to Nicholas Passauf, the tiler,

for undertaking this courageous action. One could see him from all the streets, with his flag of white silk with the fleur-de-lis upon it; and from all the windows of the two barracks the marine artillerymen were firing at him. Passauf planted the flag in spite of them, and then hurried down to hide himself in the granary of Trois-Maisons, while the sailors sought him through the town to exterminate him.

That is how these people behaved. But the workmen, the peasants, and the citizens in a mass, cried, "Long live peace! Down with the conscription and associated rights!" because every one was tired of living like the bird on the branch, and having his bones broken for affairs that did not concern him.

It may be well imagined that, amid this universal joy, I was the most joyous of all; the others had not been fortunate enough to get back, after going through the terrible battles of Weissenfels, Lützen, and Leipsic, not to speak of the typhus fever; for me, I knew what glory was; and that increased my love of peace and my horror of the conscription.

I had gone back to Father Goulden's, and all my life long I shall remember how he received me; all my life long I shall hear how he cried out, "It's you, Joseph! Ah, my dear boy, I thought we had lost you!" and we wept as we embraced, and since that time we had lived together like two real friends; he used to make me relate my battles a thousand times over; and then he would laugh, and call me the old soldier.

Then he had to tell me about the blockade of Phalsbourg; how the enemy had appeared before the town in January, how the old soldiers of the Republic, left alone ~~there~~ with a few sailor gunners, had hastened to

put up our cannon on the ramparts; how the people had been obliged to eat horse because of the scarcity, and break up the citizens' furnaces to make bullets. Father Goulden, in spite of his sixty years, had served at a gun on the bastion of the powder-magazine, in the direction of Bichelberg; and I could picture him to myself, with his black silk skull-cap and his spectacles, pointing a great twenty-four-pounder; the idea made both of us laugh, and helped us to pass the time.

We had fallen once more into our old habits; I used to lay the table and make the stew. I had also gone back to my little room, and I thought of Catharine day and night. Only instead of being in constant fear of the conscription, as in 1813, it was quite another thing now. Men are never quite contented. They have always something to annoy them. How many times have I seen this in the course of my life! And this is what disturbed me then:

You must know that I was to marry Catharine; we had agreed on the matter, and my aunt Grethel was quite willing. Unfortunately, the conscripts of 1814 had received leave, but those of 1813 were still soldiers. It was no longer so dangerous to be a soldier as it had been under the Empire. Many of those who had retired to their villages were living quietly there without ever seeing a gendarme come near them; but for all that, it was necessary to have a permit before one could marry. The new mayor, Mons. Jourdan, would never have inscribed my name on the marriage register without having this permit; and that's what troubled me.

Immediately after opening the gates, Father Goulden had written to the war minister, whose name was Dupont, setting forth that I was at Phalsbourg, still

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somewhat ill in health, that I had limped like a cripple from my birth, but that I had been taken all the same in the hurry ; that I was a bad soldier who would make an excellent father of a family, and that it would be mere murder to prevent me from marrying, inasmuch as there had never been a man worse put together or more full of physical defects than I ; that I should have to go to the hospital, &c., &c.

It was a very good letter, and it told the truth, too ; for the very idea of having to go would have made me ill.

So, from day to day, Aunt Grethel, Mons. Goulden, Catharine, and I were waiting for the minister's reply. Nobody can imagine how impatient I felt. When Brainstein the letter-carrier, the bell-ringer's son, passed by in the street, I could hear him coming half a mile off ; it quite put me out, and I could not do anything but lean out of the window. I watched him as he went into one house after another ; and when he stayed a little too long, I said to myself, " What does he want gossiping there all this time ? Why can't he deliver his letter and come out at once ? He's a regular gossiping old woman, this young Brainstein ! " I used to be quite angry with him, and sometimes I even went down and ran to meet him, calling out—

" Have you nothing for me ? "

Then he would look at his letters, and reply—" No, Mr. Joseph, no, I have nothing for you. "

And then I would go back quite downcast, and Father Goulden, who had been watching me, would cry out :—

" My boy, my boy, exercise a little patience. Why, bless me, it will come. We are not in war time now. "

"But he might have answered me ten times over, Mons. Goulden."

"Do you think he has nothing but your affairs to attend to? He gets hundreds of letters of that kind every day; every one gets his answer in his proper turn, Joseph. And then, everything has been turned upside down lately. Come, come, we are not the only people in the world; many other honest lads, who want to get married, are waiting for their permit to do so."

I thought his reasons very good, but could not help saying to myself—"Ah, if that minister knew how much pleasure he could give us by writing two words, I am sure he would write them at once. How we should bless him—Catharine and I, and Aunt Grethel, and everybody!" But the end of it was, that we had to wait.

It may well be imagined that on Sundays I had resumed my old habit of going to Quatre-Vents; and those days I used to wake up very early. I don't know what it was that woke me. At first I used to fancy I was still a soldier, and used to feel cold all over. Then, when I opened my eyes, I looked at the ceiling, and remembered that I was at Father Goulden's, at Phalsbourg, in my own little room; that it was Sunday, and that I was going to see Catharine. This idea woke me up entirely; I fancied I saw Catharine before me, with her pretty pink cheeks and blue eyes. I should have liked to get up at once, dress, and set off; but the clock was striking four, and the town gates were not yet opened.

I had to wait, and this delay annoyed me greatly. To keep up my patience, I used mentally to go over the



history of my engagement to Catharine. I remembered the early days, the fear of the conscription, the bad number I drew, how the old gendarme Werner had called out—"Fit for service" at the mayor's; my departure, the route, Mayence, the great Capougnierstrasse, the kind woman who had prepared me a foot-bath there; and then, further on, Frankfort, Erfurt, where I received the first letter from home, two days before the battle; the Russians, the Prussians—in fact, everything and I could have wept silently, but the idea of Catharine always came back to me. Then five o'clock struck, and I jumped out of bed, and washed and shaved myself; and Father Goulden, still ensconced behind his bed-curtains, with his nose pointing upwards, would say to me—

"Ah, I hear you, I hear you. You've been turning and tossing about for the last half-hour. Ah, ha, it's Sunday to-day!"

That used to make him laugh; and I laughed, too, as I bade him good morning, and then went down the staircase at one jump.

There were very few people in the streets yet; but butcher Sepel used to call out to me each time—

"Oh, Joseph, just come here; I've something to tell you!"

But I did not even turn my head; and two minutes later I was already on the high road to Quatre-Vents, beyond the outworks and the glacis. What fine weather it was! what a beautiful year! How everything was growing green and flourishing, and how busy the people were, trying to make up for lost time, to plant their early cabbages and beetroot, to dig up the earth that the cavalry had trampled down! How every one

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was gaining fresh courage, and hoping in the goodness of God for the sun and the rain which we wanted so sorely!

All along the road, in the little gardens, women, old men, every one, in fact, dug and worked, and ran to and fro with watering-pots.

"Ho, Father Thiébeau," cried I; "ho, Mother Fürst; courage, courage!"

"Yes, yes, Mons. Joseph, you are very right, we must work bravely; this blockade has thrown everything back, and we have no time to lose."

And the wheelbarrows, and the carts laden with bricks and tiles, planks, beams, and joists, how early they were all rolling towards the town, to rebuild the houses, and repair the roofs that had been shattered by bomb-shells! How the whips cracked and the hammers resounded afar through the country! On all sides you saw carpenters and masons around the dormer windows. Father Ulrich and his three lads were already on the roof of the Panier Fleuri, that had been woefully battered by the cannon-balls, putting up the new framework; one could hear them whistling and hammering in cadence. Ah, yes, it was a busy time; peace had come back! Nobody thought of wishing for war then; every one wished to repair the injury that the war had done him, and understood what peace at home is worth; no, no, people knew that a saw or a plane did better work than a cannon; every one knew how many tears and how much labour it costs to repair, in ten years, the mischief the bomb-shells can do in two minutes.

And how merrily I ran along then! No more marching, no more countermarching; I knew where I was going, without receiving orders from Sergeant

Pinto. And the larks, too, darting upward and fluttering towards the sky, how beautifully they sang! and the quails, and the linnets! Good heavens, one is only young once! And the beautiful freshness of the morning, the good smell of the dog-roses in the hedges; and the point of the old roof of Quatre-Vents, and the little chimney smoking gaily. Said I, "It's Catharine who lights the fire yonder, and she's preparing our coffee now;" and how I ran! At last I was near the village, and walked a little more slowly to get my breath, while I looked at our little windows and laughed in joyful anticipation. Then the door opened, and Mother Grethel appeared, still in her woollen petticoat, with a great broom in her hand; she turned round, and I heard her cry out—

"Here he is! here he is!"

And almost immediately Catharine came running out, looking prettier than ever in her little blue cap.

"Ah, that's well, that's well. I was expecting you."

How happy she looked, and how I kissed her! Ah, there's nothing like youth. I can see these things before me now. I seem to go once more into the old room with Catharine; and Aunt Grethel, shouldering her broom with a triumphant air, cries out—

"No more conscription! that's all over!"

Then we laughed merrily, and they made me sit down; and while Catharine looked at me, auntie resumed—

"Well! that rascally minister has not written yet? Will he never write? Does he take us for fools? The other stirred himself too much, and this one doesn't stir himself enough! It's very disagreeable, though, to be always ordered about like that. You're no longer a

soldier, because you had been left for dead ; it is we who saved you, and they have nothing more to do with you."

"Certainly, certainly, you are in the right, Aunt Grethel," I replied ; "but for all that we cannot be married without going to the mayor's ; and if we don't go to the mayor's, the clergyman won't dare to marry us in church."

Then my aunt became grave ; and at last she always said—

"Look you, Joseph ! Those people, from the first to the last of them, always arrange everything for their own advantage. Who is it pays the gendarmes and the judges ? Who is it pays the curés ? Who is that pays all of them ? Why, we ; and now they won't even marry us. It is an abominable thing ! If this goes on, we will go to Switzerland and get married."

These words sobered us a little ; but then we would pass the rest of the day laughing and singing.

## CHAPTER II.

AMID all my great impatience, I saw something every day ; and these things come back to me now, just like a comedy played at a fair. I saw the mayors, deputies, municipal councillors of the villages, dealers in corn and wood, gamekeepers and field bailiffs, all people who for the last ten years had been looked upon as the Emperor's best friends, and who had, moreover, been dreadfully severe when any one said a word against his Majesty. I saw them, in the exchange, and in the market-place, and everywhere else, crying out against the tyrant, the usurper, the Corsican ogre. One would have thought that Napoleon had done them all manner of harm, whereas they and their families had always enjoyed the best places under his rule.

I have often thought, afterwards, that this is the way people get the best places under all governments ; but, in spite of that, I should be ashamed to cry out against those who could no longer answer me, and whom I had flattered a thousand times. I would rather work, and remain poor, than become rich by such means as that. But that's the way with men !

It is right that I should mention that our old mayor and three of our councillors did not follow this example. Mons. Goulden used to say that at any rate these men had some self-respect, and that the railers were dishonourable fellows.



I can even remember how one day the Mayor of Hacmatt, having come to get his watch mended at our shop, began to talk in such a way against the Emperor, that Mons. Goulden got up all of a sudden, and said to him—

“Look here, Mons. Michel, here is your watch; I will not work for you. . . . What! what! you, who even last year were calling him ‘the great man’ everywhere—you who would never call Bonaparte simply ‘The Emperor,’ but who used to say, ‘The Emperor and King, protector of the Helvetic Confederation,’ as if you had your mouth full of soup—you now cry out that he’s an ogre, and you call Louis XVIII. ‘Louis the Wellbeloved?’ Come—you ought to be ashamed! Do you take people for fools, and think they can’t remember?”

Then the other answered—

“It’s easy to see that you’re an old Jacobin.”

“It’s no matter to any one what I am,” retorted Mons. Goulden; “but at any rate I’m not a toad-eater.”

He had become quite pale; and at last he cried out—

“That’s enough, Mons. Michel; that’s enough: a sneak is a sneak under any government.”

That day his indignation was so great that he could hardly work; and every moment he was getting up and crying out—

“Joseph, if I had had a fancy for the Bourbons, that set of rascals would have disgusted me with them before now. Those are the kind of people who spoil everything; for they approve of everything, and declare that everything is charming, and can’t find fault with anything, and lift up their hands towards heaven in admiration if the King only coughs; and then they

want to come in for their part of the cake. And when, by dint of being ridiculously flattered, the emperors and kings at last look upon themselves as gods, and revolutions come, then these rascals abandon them, and begin the same game with their successors. In that way they always remain at the top, and honest people remain in poverty."

This happened at the beginning of May, at the time they were posting up at the mayor's the news that the King had just made his solemn entry into Paris, surrounded by the marshals of the Empire, "that the greater part of the population had rushed forth to meet him, that old men, women, and little children had climbed up into balconies to enjoy a sight of him, and that he had gone first to the church of Notre Dame to give thanks to the Lord, and not till afterwards had he entered the palace of the Tuileries."

It was also posted up that the Senate had had the honour of making him a magnificent speech, saying that he must not be alarmed at all our disorder, that he must take courage, and that the senators would aid him in setting things right. Everybody approved of this speech.

But a little time afterwards we were to enjoy a new spectacle—namely, the return of the emigrants from the heart of Germany, and from Russia. Some came in the slow stage-coaches, others in simple "salad baskets," a kind of chariot of wicker-work, with two or four wheels. The ladies wore dresses of great flowered patterns, and the men nearly all wore the old-fashioned French coat, with knee-breeches, and a great waistcoat hanging down over the thighs, as they are represented in pictures of the time of the Republic.

All these people looked proud and glad; they were delighted to get back to their own country.

In spite of the old screws of horses which dragged their wretched straw-filled chariots, and in spite of the quaint look of the peasants they had to ride on the box before them as postillions, I felt touched at the sight of them. I remembered how glad I had been, five months before, to see France again; and I said to myself, "Poor people, how they will weep when they see Paris once more: how glad they will be!"

When they stopped at the Red Ox, lately the hotel of ambassadors, marshals, princes, dukes, and all those rich people who now no longer appeared, one could see them in the rooms, combing and dressing and shaving themselves. Towards noon, they would all come down, calling and shouting "Jean! Claude! Germain!" with an impatient air, ordering about as if they had been great personages, and sitting round the large tables, with their old shabby servants standing behind them, napkin on arm; and these people with their old-fashioned costume, their pleased air and fine manners, put a very good face upon matters; and those who saw them said to one another—

"Here are some Frenchmen who have come a long distance. They were wrong to go away as they did, and rouse up Europe against us; but there's pardon for every sin. May it go well with them, and may they be happy, that's the worst we wish them!"

Some of these emigrants arrived in postchaises; then our new mayor, Mons. Jourdan, Knight of St. Louis, Mons. le Curé Loth, and the new town-commandant, Mons. Robert de la Faisanderie, in grand embroidered uniforms, used to meet them at the gate. When the

postillions' whips were heard on the ramparts, they came forward with smiling faces, as if something very pleasant were happening to them; and directly the carriage stopped the commandant ran to open the door, with enthusiastic cries of welcome. Sometimes also, out of respect, they stood stock still, and I have seen these people bow to each other, slowly and gravely, once, twice, thrice, coming a little nearer at each salutation.

Then Father Goulden, behind our window, would smile and say—

“Do you see, Joseph? that's the grand style—the grand style of the ancien régime, the old state of things. By merely looking out of our window we may learn fine manners, to use them when we become dukes or princes.”

At other times he said—

“Those old fellows, Joseph, fired at us at the lines of Wissembourg; they were gallant cavaliers, and fought well, as all Frenchmen fight; but we turned them out for all that!”

Then he winked his eyes, and sat down to work again in quite a good humour.

But then came the report from the helpers and servants at the Red Ox that these people did not scruple to assert among themselves “that they had conquered us at last; that they were our masters; that King Louis XVIII. had been reigning ever since Louis XVII., the son of Louis XVI.; that we were rebels, and that they had come to put us in our places!” Then Father Goulden said to me with a dissatisfied air—

“Things are going badly, Joseph. Do you know what all these people will do in Paris? They will demand back their fishponds, their forests and parks,

their châteaux, their pensions, to say nothing of good offices and honours and distinctions of all kinds. You think their dress and their wigs very antiquated. Well, their ideas are more antiquated even than their dress and their wigs. Those people are more dangerous for us than the Russians and Austrians—for the Russians and Austrians will go away, and these will remain. They will come and destroy what we have been five-and-twenty years in effecting. You see how proud they are! Many of them have been living in great poverty beyond the Rhine, but they consider themselves of a different race to us—a superior race; they think the people are always ready to be shorn, as they were before 1789. They say that Louis XVIII. has good sense; so much the better for him. If he is so unfortunate as to listen to these people, if they even think he can be got to listen to their advice, everything is lost. It will be a war against the nation. The people have been thinking for twenty-five years; they know their rights, and know that one man is as good as another, and that talk about noble races is all nonsense; every one wants to keep his field, each one wants equality of rights, and all will defend themselves to the death.”

That is what Father Goulden said to me; and as my permit did not come, I thought that perhaps the minister had not time to answer me, because of having all these counts and viscounts and dukes and marquises on his hands, who were demanding back their forests, their fishponds, and their fine offices. I felt indignant, and cried out—

“What a wretched state of things! So soon as one misfortune is over another begins, and it is always peaceable people who suffer for the faults of others.

Good Lord, deliver us from the nobles, old and new! May they receive every blessing, but may they leave us in peace!"

One morning Aunt Grethel came to see us; it was a Friday, a market-day. She had her great basket on her arm, and looked cheerful. I looked at the door, thinking that Catharine would come in behind her, and I said—

"Ah, good morning, Aunt Grethel. Of course Catharine is in town, and is coming?"

"No, Joseph, no; she is at Quatre-Vents," answered my aunt. "We are up to our ears in work, sowing seed."

As I looked disappointed, and was secretly annoyed because I had been rejoicing beforehand, my aunt put down her basket on the table, and lifting up the cloth from it, said—

"Look, there is something for you, Joseph—something from Catharine."

I looked, and saw a great nosegay of little may-roses with violets, and three great sprigs of lilac round it, with their leaves. I was pleased at the sight, and laughed and said—

"That smells good."

And Father Goulden, who had turned round, laughed too.

"You see they are always thinking of you, Joseph," he said.

And then we all laughed together.

This had quite set me up again. I embraced Aunt Grethel, and said—

"You can take that to Catharine from me."

And then I went and put the bouquet in a vase at

the side of the window, near my bed. I smelt it, thinking how Catharine had gone out very early in the morning to gather these violets, and the roses with the fresh dew upon them, and how she had arranged them, with the lilac around them, and they appeared more fragrant to me than ever, so that I could not leave off looking at them! At last I went out, saying to myself—

“I shall be able to smell them all night; to-morrow morning I shall put them in fresh water; the day after to-morrow will be Sunday, and then I shall see Catharine, and give her a kiss to thank her.”

So I went back into the room where Aunt Grethel was chatting with Father Goulden about the markets, the price of seed, and similar matters, both of them looking cheerful enough. My aunt had put her basket on the ground, and she said to me—

“Well, Joseph, the permit has not come yet.”

“No, not yet; it’s a terrible thing.”

“Yes,” she replied, “these ministers are all one as bad as another. This place must be filled by men picked out for their laziness and worthlessness.”

Then she added—

“But make yourself easy; I have an idea now which will change all that.”

She laughed. And seeing that Mons. Goulden and I were listening attentively, she went on to say—

“Just now, when I was in the covered market, the town-sergeant, Harmentier, announced that a great mass was to be performed for the repose of the souls of Louis XVI., Pichegru, Moreau, and one other.”

“Yes, George Cadoudal,” said Mons. Goulden roughly; “I read it in the *Gazette* last evening.”

"Just so—of Cadoudal," assented my aunt. "Well, do you see, Joseph, when I heard this announcement, I thought directly: this time we shall get the permit. There are to be processions—penitential processions; we will all go together—Catharine, Joseph, and I; we shall be among the first, and everybody will say—'Those are good royalists—well-disposed people.' Mons. le Curé will get to hear of it; and now the curés have arms that can reach as far as those of colonels and generals used to do; we shall go to see him; he will receive us well, and will even draw up a petition for us, and I tell you that it will do—that it cannot fail!"

Aunt Grethel explained all these things to us in a low voice, with uplifted finger, and apparently very well pleased with her own acuteness. I was pleased too, and I thought—"She is right, that is what ought to be done; this Aunt Grethel is a woman of very good common sense." But then, as I looked at Father Goulden, I saw that he had become very grave, and had even turned away, and seemed to be examining a watch through his magnifying-glass, knitting his great white eyebrows the while. I could tell by his face, at a glance, when a thing displeased him; and I said—

"See here, Aunt Grethel, I think that this might do; but before undertaking anything, I should like to hear what Mons. Goulden thinks of it."

Then he turned round, and said—

"Every one is free, Joseph—every one should act according to his own conscience. To hold a service in expiation of the death of Louis XVI.—good! honest men of all parties have nothing to say against its being done, by the royalists of course, for any one who kneels



down from self-interest had better have stayed at home. So I pass over Louis XVI. But as to Pichegru, Moreau, and Cadoudal, it's a different thing. Pichegru wanted to surrender his army to the enemy, Moreau fought against France, and George Cadoudal is an assassin—three ambitious men, who only wanted to reduce us to servitude, and each one of whom deserved his fate. That's what I think."

"But, good heavens!" cried Aunt Grethel, "what is all that to us? We don't go there for their sakes, we go to get the permit. I don't care a straw for the rest, nor does Joseph. Do you, Joseph?"

I felt very much embarrassed, for what Mons. Goulden had just said appeared to me very reasonable. Seeing that, he said—

"I can quite understand the affection of young people; but, Mother Grethel, one ought never to induce a young man by such means to sacrifice what appears to him honourable. If Joseph does not hold my views concerning Pichegru, Cadoudal, and Moreau, let him go to the procession, it is quite right; I shall never think of reproaching him on the matter. But, for my part, I shall not go."

"Nor shall I go either," I struck in. "I think with Mons. Goulden."

I saw that Aunt Grethel was getting angry, for she turned quite red; but she calmed herself almost directly, and said—

"Well, Catharine and I will go, because we laugh at all these antiquated ideas."

Father Goulden could not help smiling at her angry vehemence; he said—

"Yes, everybody is free—do just as you like."

Then my aunt took up her basket to go, and, laughing at him, made me a sign to accompany her.

I put on my overcoat in a hurry, and overtook my aunt at the corner of the street.

"Listen, Joseph," she said, as we trudged on towards the great square; "this Father Goulden is a good man, but he's an old idiot. From the earliest times when I first knew him, he has never been satisfied with anything. He dares not say so, but his one idea is always the Republic; he thinks of nothing but his old Republic, when everybody was a sovereign—beggars, charcoal-burners, cobblers, Jews and Christians alike. There's no common sense in that. And after all, what is one to do? If he were not so good a man, I would not restrain myself so much before him; only we must remember that but for him you would never have learnt a good trade, that he has done us much good, and that we are bound to respect him. That's why I made haste to get away, for I might have lost my temper."

"You did very right," said I. "I love Mons. Goulden like a father, and you as if you were my own mother; nothing could grieve me more than to see you two quarrel."

"I quarrel with such a good man as that!" exclaimed Aunt Grethel. "No, no! I would rather jump out of window. But you must not listen to everything he says, Joseph; for I maintain, for my part, that this procession is a very good thing for us, that Mons. le Curé will get us the permit; and that's the chief thing after all. Catharine and I will go. For you, as Mons. Goulden stays at home, you shall stay there too, but I am sure that three-fourths of the town and of the

neighbourhood will come ; and whether it is for Moreau, for Pichegru, for Cadoudal, or for any one else, you will see that it will be very fine."

"I'm sure of that," said I.

We had arrived at the German Gate ; then I embraced my aunt once more, and went home very well pleased.

## CHAPTER III.

I REMEMBER this visit of Aunt Grethel's so well, because a week afterwards began the processions, the expiations, and the preachings, which never left off until the return of the Emperor in 1815, and which were then resumed, and lasted until the departure of Charles X. in 1830. All who remember those days know that there was no end of it. And again, whenever I think of Napoleon, I hear the cannon of the arsenal sounding in the morning, and making our little window-panes rattle; and then Father Goulden calls to me from his bed—"Another victory, Joseph! Ah! ah! always victories!" And when I think of Louis XVIII., I hear the bells ringing; I can fancy Father Brainstein and his two great lads hanging on to all the bell-ropes of the church, and Mons. Goulden says to me with a laugh—"There, Joseph, that's for Saint Magloire or Saint Polycarp."

I can never recall these times in any other way. Under the Empire, I also see, at nightfall, Father Coiffé, Nicholas Rolfo, and five or six other veterans loading their cannon to fire the twenty-one rounds, while half Phalsbourg, stationed on the bastion opposite, watched the red flash, the smoke, and the wads flying into the ditches; then in the evening the illuminations, the crackers, the squibs, and children shouting "Vive l'Empereur!" and then a few days later, the certificates of death, and a conscription.

Under Louis XVIII. I see wayside altars set up and peasants coming with carts full of moss, broom, and little fir-trees, ladies coming out of the houses with great vases of flowers, people lending their candlesticks and crucifixes—and then the processions—Mons. le Curé and his vicars ; the choir children, Jacob Cloutier, Purrhus, and Tribou, singing ; the beadle Koekli in his red robes with his banner held up towards the sky ; the bells ringing full peals ; Mons. Jourdan, the new mayor, with his fat red face, his fine uniform, and his cross of St. Louis ; the new town commandant, Mons. Robert de la Faisanderie, with his three-cornered hat under his arm, his great wig powdered as if with hoar frost, and his embroidery glittering in the sun ; and behind him the municipal council, and innumerable tapers, which they used to light by one another when the wind blew ; then the Swiss Jean Pierre Sirou, with his black-blue beard well shaven, his magnificent hat set square across his shoulders, his large white silk baldric, embroidered with fleurs-de-lis, across his breast, and his halbert held upright shining in the air like a silver disc ; then young girls, ladies, and thousands of country people in their Sunday clothes, praying all together. The old women at the head of every village community, repeating incessantly, “Bete für uns—bete für uns!”\* in a loud voice ; the streets strewn with leaves, and garlands and white flags in the windows ; the Jews and Lutherans standing behind their Venetian shutters, in the upper stories, looking down from their shady position, while the sun lit up the beautiful sight ! Yes, that lasted from 1814 till 1830, except during the Hundred Days, to say nothing of missions, the visitations of the bishops, and other

\* Pray for us—pray for us.

extraordinary ceremonies. I may as well tell you about this at once, for to describe every procession as it occurred would take us too long.

Well, then, it began on the 19th of May, 1814. And the very day when Harmentier announced the great expiation, there arrived five preachers from Nancy, young men who continued preaching all the week, from morning till midnight. It was to prepare the way for the expiation; nothing was talked of in the town but these priests, and people were being converted; all the girls and women were going to confession.

A report was also spread that the national property would have to be given up; and it was said that the procession would prove who were rogues and who were honest men; for the rogues would not dare to show their faces in it. You may imagine how annoyed I was at being obliged to remain, in some sort against my will, among the rogues. Thank Heaven, I had nothing to reproach myself with as regarded the death of Louis XVI., nor did I possess national property; all that I wanted was the permission to marry Catharine. I also thought, with Aunt Grethel, that Mons. Goulden was wrong in standing out obstinately against these things; but I should never have dared to speak to him about it. I was very uncomfortable; especially as the people who brought us watches to repair, respectable people too, mayors, and forest-keepers, and such-like, approved of all this preaching, and said that nothing like it had ever been heard. Mons. Goulden used to listen to them, and go on with his work without replying; and when it was finished he would simply say, "Here, Mons. Christophe or Mons. Nicholas, it comes to so and so much." He did not seem to take any interest

in these things; and only when one or other of these people talked of the national property, of the rebellion of twenty-five years ago, of expiation for old crimes, he would take off his spectacles, and raise his head to listen; and then he would say, with a look of surprise—

“Ah, bah—ah, bah! What, is it as fine as all that, Mons. Claude? Just look at that—you astonish me—and do these young preachers talk so well? Ah, if work were not so pressing, I should go and hear them too . . . I should also want to be enlightened.”

I still thought he would change his mind about the procession for Louis XVI.; and the evening before, while we were finishing our supper, I felt much pleased when he said to me all at once, in a good-humoured way—

“Well, Joseph, don’t you feel curious to hear the preachers? So many fine things are said about them, that I should really like to know the truth of it.”

“Oh, Mons. Goulden,” I answered, “I should like it of all things; but there’s no time to be lost, for the church is always full at the second bell.”

“Well, then, let us go,” said he: and he got up and took down his hat. “Yes, I am curious to see that . . . Those young men astonish me. Let us go.”

We went out accordingly. The moon shone so bright outside, that one could recognise people as if it had been broad day. At the corner by Fouquet’s, one could already see the steps of the church covered with people. Two or three old women, Annette Petit, Dame Balaie, and Jeannette Baltzer, hurried by us, with their shawls tightly fastened, and their broad-bordered caps over their eyes.

“Ah, ha,” said Mons. Goulden, “there go the old ladies; they’re always the same!”

He laughed, and said that since Father Colin's time he had not seen so many people at evening service. I could not believe that he referred to the old innkeeper at the Three Roses, opposite the infantry barracks; and I said to him—

“Was he a priest, Mons. Goulden?”

“No, no,” he answered, smiling, “I am talking of old Colin. In 1792, when we had the club at the church, anybody might preach; but it was old Colin who spoke best. He had a superb voice, and he said things that were strong and just; folks came from Saverne, from Sarrebourg, and from farther still, to hear him; the ladies and the young misses—citizens they used to call them then—filled the choir, the galleries, and the benches; they wore little cockades in their caps, and used to sing the Marseillaise to excite the youths. You have never seen anything like it. Look, Annette Petit, Dame Baltzer, and all those whom you see trotting on before us with their prayer-books in their hands, were among the foremost; but they had hair and teeth then—they loved liberty, equality, and fraternity. Ha, ha, ha, poor Bevel, poor Annette now they are going to repent. They were very good patriots, though, and I think the Lord will pardon them!”

He laughed at the recollection of these old stories. But on the steps of the church he became grave, and said—

“Yes, yes; everything changes! I remember that on the day when Colin spoke of the country's being in danger, in '93, three hundred young men of the neighbourhood started to join Hoche's army; he followed them, and became their commander; a terrible man he was, in the midst of his grenadiers. He re-



refused to sign the requisition to make Bonaparte Emperor. Now he pours out glasses of liquor, over a counter."

Then looking at me as if astonished at his own thoughts, he added—"Let us go in, Joseph!"

We entered, passing under the great pillars of the organ. We were crowded close to each other. He said nothing. Some lights were burning at the end of the choir, over the heads of the congregation. The opening and shutting of the doors alone broke the silence. This lasted for about ten minutes. More and more people kept coming in behind us. At last Sirou's halbert was heard to clash on the pavement, and Mons. Goulden said to me—"Here he comes!"

A light, over the holy water vessel, shed a few rays over us. At the same time a shadow was seen mounting into the pulpit on the left, and Koekli's long pole lighted up two or three tapers around it. The preacher might have been twenty-five or thirty years old; he had a good-looking, rosy face; and thick fair hair, below his tonsure, fell in curls on his neck.

The service began with the singing of a canticle—the young ladies of the place sang in the choir. The words were: "What happiness to be a Christian!" After that the preacher told us from the pulpit that he came to defend faith, religion, and the divine right of Louis XVIII., and asked if any one would have the audacity to maintain the contrary opinion. But no one cared to be stoned, and all maintained silence. But presently a tall, thin man, seated on a bench opposite, a fellow six feet high, swarthy, and clad in a black capote, got up and called out—

"I do!—I do! I maintain that faith, religion, the

right of kings, and all the rest of it, are mere superstitions. I maintain that the Republic is just, and that the worship of reason is worth more than all of them !”

And so he went on. The people were indignant ; nothing like this had ever been seen. When he had finished speaking, I looked at Mons. Goulden. He was laughing quietly to himself, and said to me—

“ Listen !—listen !”

Of course I listened. The young preacher prayed to God for this unbeliever ; and then he began to speak so finely, that the crowd were in ecstasies. The tall, thin man retorted that it had been well done to guillotine Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, and all the family !—whereupon the general indignation became greater than ever, till at last the Baraquins of Bois-de-Chênes, and still more their wives, wanted to rush to his bench and tear him to pieces. But then Sirou came up, calling out—“ Make room !—make room !”

And then old Koekli, in his red robe, came and stood before the man, who took refuge in the sacristy, lifting up his hands and crying out that he was converted, that he renounced Satan, his pomps and all his works. The preacher then offered up a prayer for the soul of this sinner ; it was a real triumph for religion.

Towards eleven o'clock every one went away ; and it was announced that on the next day, which was a Sunday, the procession would take place.

Because of the great crowd, which had always pushed us back into a corner, Mons. Goulden and I had been the last to come out ; when we got out at length, the peasants of Quatre-Vents, of Baraques, of St. Jean des Choux, and of Bigelberg were already gone away through the German Gate. Everywhere the shutters

of the townspeople were heard closing, and some old women went away through the street of the Arsenal, chatting among themselves about these wonderful things.

Father Goulden and I walked home through the silence of the night; he said nothing, but walked with his head bent and a smile on his face. And so we came back to our own room.

I lit the candle, and, while he was undressing, I said to him—

“Well, Mons. Goulden, don’t you think they speak finely?”

“Yes, certainly, Joseph, yes,” he answered, smiling; “for young people who have seen nothing, it’s not bad.”

Then he burst out laughing, and said—

“But if old Colin had played the Jacobin’s part, I can’t help thinking he would have puzzled that young man terribly.”

I was astonished to hear this. I waited to hear what Mons. Goulden would say next. Then he drew down his black silk cap over his ears, and said with a thoughtful air—

“It’s all very well—all very well; but these people are going too fast—a great deal too fast! No one will make me believe that Louis XVIII. knows of all this; no, he has seen too many things in his life not to know men better than that. Well, good night, Joseph—good night! Let us hope that an order may soon come from Paris to send back these young men to their seminaries—good night!”

I went into my room, and after I got into bed I dreamt a long time of Catharine, of the Jacobin in the church, and of the procession I was to see next day.

## CHAPTER IV.

IN the morning, the bells began to ring at dawn. I rose, opened my shutters, and saw the red sun rising behind the powder-magazine, above the forest of Bonne-Fontaine. It might be about five o'clock; one could already judge how hot it was going to be; and the air was full of the scent of oak, and beech, and holly leaves that had been scattered in the streets. Groups of peasants were already arriving, and one heard them chatting amid the silence. All the different villages, Wechem, Metting, Graufthal, Dosenheim, could be known by their three-cornered hats, slouched down in front, their square-cut coats; the women in long black dresses, and great pointed caps spread out over their necks; those of Dagsberg, Hildehouse, Harberg, and Houpe could be recognised by their great round felts; the women, with their short hair and petticoats, were little, dark, slender, and quick as gunpowder. The children followed, carrying their shoes in their hands; but they all sat down in a row on the stakes of Luterspech, and put on their shoes to walk in the procession.

Some curés also came in parties of threes and fours, walking behind their villagers, chatting and laughing together gaily enough.

For me, I rested my elbow on the window, and

looked at all this, and thought how these people must have set out before midnight to get here so early in the morning; how they must have crossed their mountains, walking for hours under the trees, and crossing the little bridges in the moonlight. I thought that religion was certainly a fine thing;—the townspeople cared nothing for it; but these thousands of toilers in the fields, these woodcutters and labourers, rude people, but good people for all that, who loved their wives and children, who honoured the old age of their parents, and succoured them, and closed their eyes reverently in the hope of a better life hereafter—that for these religion was the one consolation on earth.

And, looking at the crowd, which was still passing by, I fancied that Aunt Grethel and Catharine must think as I did; and I was happy in the thought that they would pray for me.

The sun rose higher, the bells began to ring, and I still leant there, listening. I also heard Mons. Goulden getting up and dressing; a few minutes afterwards he came into my room in his shirt-sleeves, and seeing me look thoughtful he cried out—

“Joseph, the finest thing one can see in this world is the religion of the people!”

And as I stood astonished to hear him put my thoughts into words, he added—

“Yes, the love of God, the love of one’s country, and the love of one’s family are all of the same kind. But what makes one sad sometimes is to see men’s love of their country abused to satisfy the ambition of one man, and their love towards God led astray to gratify the pride and the spirit of domination of a small faction.”

I was struck by these words ; I have remembered them ever since, and have often thought that they were the sad truth.

But to come back to that important day : you must know that since the blockade we had been working on Sundays also, because Mons. Goulden, while serving on the ramparts, had neglected his work, and we were in arrear. So that day, as usual, I lit the fire in our little stove, and prepared our breakfast. The windows were open, and we could hear a great noise outside.

Father Goulden, leaning out of one of the windows, said—

“Look, all the shops are shut, except the inns and wineshops.”

He laughed, and I said to him—

“Shall we open our shop front, Mons. Goulden? It might do us a good deal of harm.”

He turned round, and looked surprised.

“Look here, Joseph,” he said, “I have never known a better lad than you ; but you want strength of character. Why should we close our shop front? If we were to close it from self-interest, if we pretended to be pious that we might gain new customers, we should be hypocrites. You sometimes talk without thinking.”

I saw at once that I had been wrong, and I answered—

“Mons. Goulden, let us have our shop front open, and people will see that we sell watches ; that will not do any one harm.”

We had hardly sat down to table, when Aunt Grethel and Catharine arrived. Catharine was dressed all in black, because of the service for Louis XVI. ; she wore

a little cap of black net, and her dress fitted her very neatly; and that made her complexion look so fair, that I could hardly believe she was the betrothed of Joseph Bertha; her neck was as white as snow, and if it had not been for her little chin, and her blue eyes, and fair hair, I should have thought it was some one else; some one like her, but still prettier. She smiled when she saw my look of especial admiration. At last I said—

“Catharine, you are too beautiful now; I dare not kiss you.”

“Oh!” she said, “there is no reason why you should not.”

And as she bent over me I gave her a long kiss, so that Mons. Goulden and Aunt Grethel looked at each other and laughed, and I wished them a long way off, that I might tell Catharine that I loved her more than ever, and would give my life for her a thousand times; but it would not have done to tell her so before them. I thought it, though, and it made me feel quite tender.

My aunt had on a black dress too, and carried her prayer-book under her arm.

“Come and kiss me too, Joseph,” she said. “You see I have my black dress on, the same as Catharine.”

I embraced her; and Father Goulden said—

“You must come and dine with us—of course, that’s understood—but you must take something in the meantime.”

“We have had our breakfast,” replied my aunt.

“Never mind that. Heaven knows when this procession will be over—you will be on your feet a long time; you must have something to keep you up.”

So they sat down, my aunt on my right, Catharine

on my left, and Mons. Goulden opposite. We drank a good glass of wine, and aunt said that the procession would be magnificent, that at least twenty-five curés of the district would be present—that Mons. le Curé Hubert of Quatre-Vents had also come—that the great temporary altar erected in the cavalry quarters was higher than the roofs—that the fir-trees and poplars round it were hung with crape, and that the altar itself was covered with a black cloth.

She told us all these particulars, while I looked at Catharine, and we both were silently thinking: “Good heavens! when shall we be allowed to marry? when will this rascally minister find time to write and say, ‘Marry, and leave me alone?’”

At last, towards nine o’clock, the second bell having begun to ring, we had to prepare for a start; then my aunt said—

“It’s the second bell—well, we shall come back to dinner as soon as we can.”

“Very well, Mother Grethel,” answered Mons. Goulden, “we shall look out for you.”

Then they rose. I went down with Catharine to the foot of the stairs to give her one more kiss. Mother Grethel cried out—

“We must make haste! We must make haste!”

They went out together, and I went upstairs again to sit down to my work. But from that time till nearly eleven o’clock, I could do nothing. The crowd of people was so great, that nothing was heard outside but one great murmur, the rustling of footsteps over leaves; and when the procession came out of the church, the effect was so grand, that Mons. Goulden himself left off working to listen to the hymns and prayers.



For my part I fancied Catharine in that multitude more beautiful than any one there, and Aunt Grethel beside her, repeating in her clear voice, "Bete für uns! Bete für uns!" I pictured them to myself very tired, and all these voices and these hymns set me thinking; I had a watch before me, and tried to work; but my thoughts were elsewhere. The higher the sun mounted, the more restless I became; till all at once Mons. Goulden said to me, laughing—

"Well, Joseph, it seems not to go well to-day."

And, as I turned quite red, he added—

"Yes, in the days when I used to think of Louise Benedurn, it was no use my looking at springs and wheels; for I saw nothing but her blue eyes before me."

He sighed; and I began to sigh too, thinking, "Yes, you're very right, Mons. Goulden, you're very right."

"That will do, Joseph," he said a moment afterwards; and he took the watch out of my hands. "Go, my boy, try and find Catharine—a man cannot conquer his love; it's stronger than he."

When I heard him say those words, I could have cried out—"Oh, you good man—oh, you just man—you will never know how much I love you." But he had got up to wipe his hands on the towel behind the door, and I merely said to him—

"If you really wish it, Mons. Goulden——"

"Yes, yes—really."

I waited to hear no more. My heart was leaping with joy. I put on my hat, and descended the stairs at a bound, crying—

"I'll be back in an hour, Mons. Goulden."

And then I was in the street. But what a crowd

of people!—it was like an ant-hill; three-cornered hats, round felts, and caps; and over all, the church bells were pealing slowly.

For more than a minute I stood on our steps, looking round, not knowing which way to turn; and seeing at last that it was impossible to advance a step in that crowd, I turned into Lanche-lane to get to the ramparts, intending to wait for the passing of the procession on the slope by the German Gate; for it was then coming up College-street. It was about eleven o'clock. On that day I was to see many things which set me thinking several times afterwards; they were omens of great misfortunes, and nobody saw them, nobody had sense enough to understand their meaning. It was only later, when everybody was in misery up to the neck, when we had to take up knapsack and gun again, to be cut to pieces; it was then only that every one said to himself, "Ah, if there had only been common sense!—ah, if there had only been justice!—if there had only been prudence!—we were so well off!—we should be at home now, instead of having all this confusion beginning again. What was there to be done?—nothing—we had only to remain quiet, and that could not be very difficult." How unfortunate!

So I went up Lanche-lane, where the deserters used to be shot, under the Empire. The noise became more distant, with the hymns, and the prayers, and the sound of bells. All the doors and windows were closed; every one had gone after the procession. Amid this great silence, I stopped for a few moments in the shade to get breath; a fresh light breeze was blowing across the fields, over the ramparts. I listened to the tumult

in the distance, and as I wiped the perspiration from my face, I thought to myself—

“Where shall I find Catharine now?”

I was going to start again, and climb the staircase of the postern, when I heard some one call out—

“Margaret, won’t you mark the points?”

And then for the first time I noticed that Father Colin’s windows on the first floor were open, and that some people were playing billiards in their shirt-sleeves. They were old soldiers’ faces, with short hair and stiff moustaches. They were going to and fro, shouting round the billiard-table, regardless alike of Louis XVI. and the mayor, the commandant and the townspeople. One of them, short and thickset, with his whiskers curled like pistol-barrels, after the hussar fashion, with his cravat untied, was even leaning out, with his billiard-cue resting against the window, and looked towards the square, crying out—

“We’ll have another game, of fifty up!”

It immediately came into my mind that these must be officers on half-pay, who were thus spending their last farthing, and would soon be hard put to it to live. I had set off again, and was hurrying along under the arch of the powder-magazine behind the college, thinking of these things; but when once we were on the slope of the German Gate, all was forgotten; the procession was coming round Bockholtz corner, and the hymns sounded like trumpet-tones in front of the altar; the young priests of Nancy were running about among the crowd, holding the cross aloft to keep order; the Swiss Sirou marched majestically under his banner; in front, all the priests and the choir children were singing, and

their prayers rose to heaven ; behind, the choir answered, and made a dull and terrible murmur.

Standing on tiptoe, half-hidden by a shed, I thought of nothing but Catharine, and wanted to discover her in the midst of this multitude ; but what a number of flags, three-cornered hats and caps defiling down the Ulrich street ! No one would ever have imagined that there were so many people in our country ; indeed, not a soul can have remained behind in the villages, except the little children, and some old women to take care of them.

This went on for at least twenty minutes, and I had given up all hope of seeing Catharine, when all of a sudden I caught sight of her with Aunt Grethel. Aunt was praying in such a clear voice that one heard her above all the rest. Catharine said nothing, but walked forward with little steps, her eyes cast down. Ah, if I could have called to her, perhaps she would have heard me ; but it was enough not to have taken part in the procession, without causing a scandal. All that I can say, and not an old man in Phalsbourg will maintain the contrary, is that Catharine was not the least pretty of the country girls, and that Joseph Bertha was a man to be envied.

She had passed by a minute or two, when the procession halted on the Place d'Armes before the great temporary altar in front of the church. Mons. le Curé officiated, and silence fell upon the whole town. In the little lanes, to the right and left, all were as quiet as if they could have seen the priest at the altar ; very many knelt down, and others rested on the steps of the houses, for the heat was excessive, and a great number of people had set out before daybreak. This spectacle moved

me; and I prayed for my native country, for peace, for all who were dear to me; and I remember how at that very moment some voices were heard, at the base of the slope of the German Gate, saying, in a good-humoured way—

“Come—come—a little room, my friends!”

The procession was blocking up the way, so that the travellers found themselves stopped by it; and these voices somewhat disturbed the devotion of the multitude. Some people in front of the gate made room; the Swiss and the beadle looked to see what it was; I myself had out of curiosity come near to the balustrade by the shed. Then five or six soldiers, quite white with dust, with bent backs and a look of utter exhaustion, came creeping towards the slope to get to the lane of the arsenal, where, no doubt, they hoped to find the passage free. I fancy I can see them now, with their worn-out boots, their white gaiters, the old patched uniforms, and the heavy shakes, all discoloured by rain and sun, and by the wear and tear of the campaign; they came on in single file, walking on the edge of the grass, on the slope, to inconvenience the people as little as possible who were seated below. An old soldier who marched past first, with three stripes on his arm, made me feel sad, for he was like my poor Sergeant Pinto, who was killed at the Hinterthor, at Leipsic; he had just such long grizzled moustaches and hollow cheeks, and the same good-humoured air, in spite of all suffering and hardship; he smiled as he carried his little bundle at the end of his stick, and kept repeating, in a low tone, “Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, excuse me.” The others followed close at his heels.

These were the first prisoners given up to us by the

convention of the 23rd of April; after that we saw some go by every day, till the month of July. These had no doubt travelled by forced marches, to get to France the sooner.

When they came to the end of the lane they saw that the crowd extended very far in the direction of the arsenal. To avoid incommoding the people further, they went into the recess of the postern, and sat down upon the damp step, with their little bundles on the ground beside them, waiting for the departure of the procession; they had come from a long distance, and hardly knew what was going on among us.

Unfortunately, the Baraquins of Bois-de-Chênes, to wit, big Horni, Zapheri Koller, Nicholas Cochart the woolcomber, Pinnacle the pedlar, who had been made mayor as a reward for having shown the way to Falberg and Graufthal to the allies during the blockade—all these vagabonds, and some others who wanted the fleur-de-lis—as if the fleur-de-lis would have made them better—unfortunately, I say, all this bad lot, who lived on faggots stolen in the woods, saw these men who had marched from afar, the old tricolour cockade on their shakos; and each of them thought, “Here’s an opportunity to show that we are the real supporters of the throne and the altar!”

So up they came, elbowing everybody, Pinnacle, his neck in a great black cravat, with a crape weeper on his hat a yard long, and his shirt-collar half-an-inch above his ears, looking as grave as a bandit who wants to appear honest—this Pinnacle came first. The old soldier with the three stripes, noticing these people threatening them from afar, had got up to see what was the meaning of it.

“Come, come,” he said, “don’t be in such a hurry;

we are not in the habit of running away. Come, what is it you want with us?"

But Pinnacle would not for anything have lost such a grand opportunity of showing his zeal for Louis XVIII., so, instead of answering him civilly, he knocked off the old soldier's hat with a great cuff, crying—

Down with the cockade!"

Of course the veteran was indignant, and wanted to defend himself; but the Baraquins came up in crowds, men and women; they flung themselves on the soldiers, threw them down, tore off their cockades and epaulettes, and trampled them under foot without shame or pity. The poor old man struggled to his feet several times, crying in a voice that might have pierced your heart—

"Ah, you set of cowards! Call yourselves Frenchmen! Ah, you rascals!"

And each time he said this he got more blows. At last they were left in their corner, all covered with blood, and their clothes in rags; and Mons. de la Faisanderie, coming up, declared that they should be taken to the lock-up.

As for me, if I could have got down, without thinking of Catharine, Aunt Grethel, or anything, I could have found it in my heart to go to their assistance, and the Baraquins should have treated me as they did them. When I think of it now, it makes me tremble; but luckily the wall of the postern was more than twenty feet high; and when I saw them led away all covered with blood, I set off running in the direction of the arsenal; and I got back to our house so deadly pale that Mons. Goulden cried out—

"Joseph, have you been crushed?"

"No, Mons. Goulden, no," I replied; "but I have just seen a terrible sight."

And I burst out crying as I told him what I had witnessed. He walked up and down, with his hands clasped behind his back, stopping from time to time to listen to me, with flashing eyes and compressed lips.

"Joseph," he said, "those soldiers must have done something!"

"No, Mons. Goulden," I replied.

"It's impossible—these men must have brought these things upon themselves. What the deuce! we're not savages! Even the Baraquins must have had some other reason besides the cockade."

He could not believe me; it was not until he had heard all the particulars twice over that he said at last—

"Well, I believe you. Yes, as you saw it with your own eyes, I believe you; and it's a greater misfortune than you imagine, Joseph. If this goes on, if these good-for-nothings are not properly held in check, if the Pinacles are to get the upper hand, the honest men will begin to open their eyes."

He said no more; for the procession being over, Catharine and Aunt Grethel came back.

We dined together. My aunt was in good spirits, and Catharine too; but my pleasure at seeing them did not prevent this other matter from weighing on my heart. Mons. Goulden was very thoughtful.

At last, when night came, I escorted Catharine and my aunt as far as Roulette, and there we wished each other good night. It might be eight o'clock, and I went back directly. Mons. Goulden had gone out to read the *Gazette* at the brewery called the Wild Man, according



to his custom on Sundays. I went to bed. Towards ten o'clock he came home, and seeing my candle still shining on the table, he pushed open the door, and said to me—

“It seems there are to be processions everywhere, Joseph; the *Gazette* is full of them.”

He also told me that eighty thousand prisoners were coming home, and that this was a good thing for the country.

## CHAPTER V.

NEXT day we had to wind up the town clocks. Mons. Goulden, who was growing old, had entrusted me with this duty, and I accordingly went out early. A high wind had blown away the leaves along the walls during the night, and every one was coming to the altars, one to take back his candles, another his vases of flowers. This sight made me melancholy, and I said—

“Now that they have had their funeral service they ought to be satisfied. I only hope the permit will come, and then all will be well; but if these people think to satisfy us merely with hymns, they are mistaken. In the Emperor’s time one had to go off to Russia or to Spain, certainly; but at any rate the ministers did not keep young people in suspense. I should like to know what is the good of peace if one is not to marry?”

These thoughts made me angry. I was angry with Louis XVIII., the Count of Artois, the emigrants, and every one, and I said to myself—“The nobles are laughing at the people!”

When I came home, I found Mons. Goulden there; he had just laid the cloth, and while we were at breakfast, I told him all I thought. He listened to me with a smile, and said—

"Take care, Joseph—take care! Don't let yourself be led astray; it seems to me you're becoming a Jacobin."

He had got up to open the cupboard. I thought he was going to take out a bottle, when he held out to me a great square letter with a big red seal.

"Look, Joseph," he said, "here's something that Brigadier Werner commissioned me to give to you."

Then my heart gave a great leap, and I looked at the letter with anxious eyes.

"Come, then, open it," said Father Goulden.

I opened it accordingly, and tried to read, but I was obliged to take time, and all at once I called out—

"Mons. Goulden, it's the permit!"

"Do you think so?" said he.

"Yes, it's the permit," I cried, waving my hand above my head.

"Ah, that rogue of a minister; they're all rogues!" said Mons. Goulden.

But I answered—

"Look here! I understand nothing about politics. Now that the permit has come, the rest does not concern me."

He laughed out loud at this, and exclaimed—

"Oh, good Joseph! good Joseph!"

I saw that he was making fun of me a little; but I did not care for that.

"Now I must let Catharine and Aunt Grethel know of this at once!" I cried out in the joy of my heart. "I must send young Chadron over immediately."

"No; you shall go yourself; that will be better," said this excellent man.

"And what about my work, Mons. Goulden?"

"Bah! bah! on such an occasion as this work must be set aside! Go, my boy, and make haste! How could you work this morning? You would not see clear."

It was true enough; I could not have done anything. I got up, so glad that I shed tears. I even embraced Mons. Goulden; and then, without waiting to change my clothes, I set off at a run. And see what joy can do. I had already long passed the German Gate, the bridge, the outwork, the inn of La Roulette, and the posting-house, without noticing one of them; and it was not till I saw our village a few hundred yards before me, and our chimney and our little windows, that I remembered it all as if in a dream, and began to read the letter over again, repeating to myself—"Yes; it's true! it's true! What happiness! What will they say?"

And so I came to our house. I pushed the door, crying—

"Aunt Grethel! Aunt Grethel!"

Aunt Grethel, in her wooden shoes, was just sweeping out the kitchen, and Catharine was coming down the old wooden staircase on the right, with bare arms and her blue handkerchief crossed in front. She had been up to the garret to bring down some chips, and both of them, when they saw me and heard me cry, "The permit!" stood as if paralysed. But I repeated, "The permit!" And then Aunt Grethel waved her hands, just as I had done, and cried out—

"Vive le roi!"

Catharine turned quite pale, and leant against the banisters. In an instant I was at her side, and gave her such a kiss that she burst out crying on my shoul-

der, and I almost carried her downstairs, while aunt kept hovering round us, crying—

“Long live the king! Long live the minister!”

There was never anything like it. Our neighbour, the old blacksmith Rupper, with his leather apron on and his shirt-sleeves turned up, came in at the noise and said—

“Well, well, neighbour, what is it?”

He had his great pincers in his hand, and stared with his little eyes wide open. Then we became a little more calm, and said—

“We have received permission to marry.”

“Ah, so that’s it!” said he. “I understand now—I understand!”

He had left the door open, and five or six neighbours, men and women—Anna Schmoutz, the spinner; Christopher Wagner, the gamekeeper; Zapheri Gross, and several others, came in directly; the room was full of people. I read out the permit aloud. They all listened, and when it was over, Catharine began to cry again, and my aunt said—

“This minister, Joseph, is the best of men. If he were here, I could embrace him, and invite him to the wedding; he should have the place of honour, with Mons. Goulden.”

Then, when our neighbours had gone to spread the news, I began to make a new declaration to Catharine, as if the old ones counted for nothing; and I made her repeat over and over again that she had never loved any one but me; and so we were touched, and then merry, and then touched again, and then merry again, and so on till evening. My aunt, who was looking to the cooking, said aloud, speaking to herself, “That is

what you may call a good king." And then she said—"If my poor Franz could come back on earth, how happy he would be this day! but one cannot have everything!"

She also maintained that the procession had done us good. Catharine and I did not answer her; our joy was too great. We dined, and had our afternoon walk, and our supper, seeing and hearing nothing; and it was nine o'clock when I perceived, all at once, that it was night, and that I must go away. Then my aunt, Catharine, and I went away together. It was a fine moonlight night. They brought me back as far as La Roulette, and on the way we settled that the marriage was to take place in a fortnight. In front of the farm, under the old poplars, aunt embraced me, and then I embraced Catharine, and then I watched them as they mounted the ascent towards the village. They turned round and waved their hands, and I waved mine too. At last, when they were out of sight, I betook myself back to the town, where I arrived at about ten o'clock. I struck across the great square, and went into our house.

Mons. Goulden was in bed, but still awake; he heard me open the door softly. When I had lit the lamp, and was going into my room, he called out, "Joseph!"

I went up to him; and looking at me kindly, he held out both his hands to me. Then he said—

"This is well, my boy; you are happy, and you deserve it. Now go to bed; we will talk of this to-morrow."

Then I went to bed, but for a long time I could not sleep; every instant I woke up, thinking: "Is it really

true? Has the permit really come?" And then I would cry out to myself, "Yes, it is true!" At last, towards morning I got to sleep. When I woke up, it was broad daylight; I jumped out of bed to dress myself, and just then Mons. Goulden cried out cheerfully, from the next room—

"Joseph, why don't you come to table?"

"Ah, pardon, Mons. Goulden," I replied, "but I was so happy I could scarcely get to sleep."

"Yes, yes, I heard you," he said, laughing.

Then I went into our workshop, where the table was already laid.

## CHAPTER VI.

NEXT to the happiness of marrying Catharine, my greatest satisfaction was in the feeling that I was about to become a citizen; for to work on one's own account is a very different thing from fighting on some one else's. Mons. Goulden had told me that he would make me a partner in his business; and I pictured to myself Joseph Bertha taking his little wife to mass on Sundays, and then for a walk in the direction of Rocheplate or Bonne Fontaine. This prospect made me feel very happy. In the meantime, I went every day to see Catharine; she used to wait for me in the orchard while Aunt Grethel was preparing cakes and dainties for the wedding; we used to look at each other for hours; she was so bright and smiling, she seemed to grow handsomer every day.

Mons. Goulden, when he saw me come home in the evening in better and better spirits, used to say to me—

“Well, Joseph, things seem to go better here than they did at Leipsic.”

Sometimes I wanted to settle down to my work, but he prevented me, and said—

“Bah! days of happiness are so rare in life! Go and see Catharine; afterwards, if I should take it into my head to get married too, you shall work for both of us.”

And then he laughed. Oh! such men as he ought



to live a hundred years ! What a good heart he had ! How just and how simple he was ! He was a real father to us ; and often even now, when I picture him to myself, with his black silk cap drawn down over his ears, his grey beard of a week's growth, with a good-humoured look in his half-shut eyes, and a kind smile on his lips, I seem to hear his voice once more, and the tears come into my eyes.

But now I must tell you of a thing that happened two evenings before our marriage, and the remembrance of which will never be effaced from my mind. It was the 6th of July, and our marriage was to take place on the 8th ; I had been dreaming of it all night. In the morning, between six and seven o'clock, I rose ; Father Goulden was already at work, with the windows open. I washed myself, and thought I would be off to Quatre-Vents ; but all at once a trumpet was blown, and I heard two taps of a drum under the French Gate, as if a regiment were marching in ; the trumpeters were trying their mouthpieces, and the drummers were giving a few taps on their drums, to get well hold of the drumsticks. Directly I heard that, I was struck with surprise, and I called out—

“ Mons. Goulden, it's the 6th.”

“ Yes,” he replied, “ all the town has been talking of it for the last week ; but you have had no ears for anything ; it's my wedding present, Joseph ; I wished to keep it as a surprise for you.”

Then I stayed to hear no more. I was out of the room like the wind, and ran down into the street. Our old drum-major, Padoue, was already lifting up his stick under the south gate ; the drummers were behind him preparing to start ; and further off was Commandant

Gémeau on horseback, and the great red plumes of our grenadiers were coming slowly along ; it was the 3rd battalion. The march began, and all my blood seemed to boil within me. At the first glance I recognised the long grey overcoats that had been served out to us on the glacis at Erfurt, on the 23rd of October, 1813 ; they had become quite green from rain, snow, and wind. It was worse than after Leipsic. The old shakos had bullet-holes in them ; but the flag alone was new in its smart oilcloth cover with the fleur-de-lis at the top.

Those who have not gone through a campaign can never tell what it is to see one's regiment again, to hear the same drums one has heard beating in front of the enemy, and then to say to oneself—

“ Here are your comrades coming back beaten, humiliated, crushed ! Here they come, bowing their heads under another cockade.” No, I never felt anything like it. Later on, many of these men of the 6th, my old officers, my former sergeants, established themselves at Phalsbourg, where old soldiers were always well received. There were Laflèche, Carabin, Lavergne, Monyot, Padoue, Chazi, and many more. Those who once commanded me in the war have worked for me, sawing wood, and doing labourers' work, as tilers, carpenters, and masons. They who had once given me orders have been bound to obey mine ; for I had a good business, whereas they were simply labourers. But it's all the same ; in speaking to them I always maintained the respect I had felt in the old times for my superior officers, and I always thought, “ Out yonder, at Weissenfels, at Lützen, and at Leipsic these people who are now obliged to bend their backs and to work hard to support their families—yonder, I say, in the advanced

guard, they maintained the honour and represented the courage of France." More changes took place after Waterloo. And our old standard-bearer Faizart has been sweeping the bridge of the German Gate for the last fifteen years. That's not good—no, our country ought to be more grateful.

So it was the 3rd battalion, coming home in a state of misery that might make the hearts of honest people bleed. Zebedee afterwards told me that they went from Versailles the 31st of March, after the capitulation of Paris, and that they had been marched to Chartres, Châteaudun, Blois, Orleans, and so on, like real Bohemians, for six weeks, without pay or equipments. At length, at Rouen, they had received orders to cross the whole of France to get to Phalsbourg, and everywhere the processions and funeral services had stirred up the populace against them. They had been obliged to endure everything, even to bivouacking in the fields, while the Austrians, Russians, Prussians, and other rascals were comfortably quartered in our villages.

Long afterwards, when he told me of all these miseries, Zebedee shed tears of rage.

"Is France no longer France?" he said. "Did we not defend the honour of the country?"

But what still gives me pleasure in my old days is to remember how the 6th was received by us. It was known already that the 1st battalion was coming home from Spain, and that the remains of the regiment and those of the 24th light infantry were to form the 6th regiment of Berry; so that all the town rejoiced at the thought that we should have two thousand men in garrison, instead of a few canonniers who were little better than veterans. There was great joy, and every

one cried out, "Long live the 6th!" The children ran to the St. John's ridge to meet the battalion, and the men had never had such a reception as this since 1813. Many old soldiers shed tears, and cried out, from their ranks, "Long live France!" But for all that, the officers marched with their heads bent, and a downcast air; though they waved their hands, to thank the people for this good reception.

Standing on the steps of our house, I watched these three or four hundred men marching by, so ragged that I only knew our regiment by the number. But all at once I caught sight of Zebedee in the ranks; he had grown so thin that his great hooked nose stood out from his face like a beak, and his old greatcoat hung down over his back in ribbons; but he had a sergeant's stripes, and his great bony shoulders still gave him a look of strength. When I caught sight of him, I shouted in a tone that was heard above the roll of the drums—

"Zebedee!"

He turned round. I rushed into his arms, while he hastily leant his musket on the ground, at the corner of the Rue de Fouquet. I was crying like a child. He said—

"Ah, it's you, Joseph? Then at any rate there are two of us left."

"Yes, it is I," I replied. "I am going to marry Catharine, and you shall be my best man."

So we walked on together. Further on, at the Haute corner, old Fürst was standing looking on with mournful eyes. The poor old man was thinking, "Now my son might return too!" When he saw Zebedee coming along with me, he went hastily into the little dark alley where his house was. In the square, Father Klipfel and five or six others were also looking at the battalion,

as it stood drawn up in line. They had received the certificates of death ; but still they hoped that perhaps there had been some mistake, for their boys were not fond of writing. They looked on ; and then, while the drums were still rolling, they went away.

The roll was called over, and just at that moment the old gravedigger came up. He still wore his little yellow velveteen waistcoat, and his grey cotton cap. He looked behind the ranks, where I was talking with Zebedee, and Zebedee, having turned round, saw him, and then became deadly pale. They looked at each other for a moment. I took the gun, and then the old man embraced his son. They said nothing, but stood for a long time, in each other's arms. After that, as the battalion was filing off to the right to go into barracks, Zebedee asked leave of Captain Vidal to go with his father, and gave his musket to the first soldier. Then we went away together towards the Capuchin street. The father said—

“You must know that your grandmother is so old she cannot get out of bed ; otherwise she would have come too.”

I went with them as far as their door, and said—

“You must come and dine with us, Father Zebedee : and you too.”

“I shall be very glad,” the old man answered. “Yes, Joseph, we will come.”

Then they went into their house ; and I went to tell Mons. Goulden of the invitation I had given, at which he was the more pleased, because Catharine and Aunt Grethel were coming too.

As for me, I had never been so happy as I was now, when I thought how my best friend, my betrothed,

and those I loved most besides, would be all in the house together.

That day, at about eleven o'clock, our great room on the first floor had a cheerful sight to show. The floor had been well scrubbed, the round table was set out in the middle, covered with a fine white cloth with a red border, and six great silver dish-covers on it; the napkins daintily folded into cocked hats in the shining plates; the great saltcellar, the sealed bottles, the great cut-glass tumblers, all glittered in the light of the sun, which poured in over the boxes of lilacs arranged on the window-sills.

Mons. Goulden had wished that everything should be done liberally, grandly, and magnificently, as if for princes and ambassadors; he had brought out his plate, quite an unusual thing; and excepting the pot-au-feu, which I superintended myself, and which contained three pounds of good meat, a head of cabbage, abundance of carrots, and in fact everything that was necessary, and which dish one can never get as good from the hotel—excepting this, all the dinner was to come from the *Ville de Metz*, where Mons. Goulden had been himself to order it.

So that towards noon, we were looking at each other, smiling and rubbing our hands; he in his fine rat-coloured coat, clean shaved, and his great reddish wig on his head, instead of the black silk cap, his chestnut-coloured small-clothes properly buckled over his thick woollen stockings, and shoes with large buckles on his feet; and I in my sky-blue coat, cut in the latest fashion, with a fine shirt with a pleated front, and my heart radiant with satisfaction. We were only waiting for our guests—Catharine, Aunt Grethel, the grave-

digger, and Zebedee. We walked up and down with smiling faces, saying to ourselves, "All is right; everything is in its place; now we ought to bring up the soup-tureen;" and I gave a look-out to see if any one was coming.

At last Aunt Grethel and Catharine turned the corner of the Rue de Fouquet; they were coming back from mass, each with her prayer-book under her arm; and further on I saw the old gravedigger, in his best coat with the wide sleeves, his old three-cornered hat hanging over his shoulders; and Zebedee, who had put on a clean shirt, and had shaved himself. They were coming from the ramparts, and walked arm-in-arm with a grave air, like people who look serious because they are perfectly happy.

Then I said—"Here they come, Mons. Goulden."

We had just time to pour the soup on the bread we had already toasted, and to put the great steaming soup-tureen in the middle of the table, which we safely accomplished, when Aunt Grethel and Catharine came in. I leave you to fancy their surprise when they saw this fine table. Directly we had embraced each other, Aunt Grethel cried out—

"So it's the wedding feast to-day, Mons. Goulden."

"Yes, Madame Grethel," answered the kind man, smiling, for on days of ceremony he used to called her Madame Grethel, instead of "Gossip," or Mother Grethel. "Yes, it's a marriage feast of good friends. You must know that Zebedee has just come back, and that he and the old gravedigger are to dine with us."

"Ah," said my aunt, "I'm very glad to hear it."

And Catharine, who had turned quite red, said to me in a low tone—

"Now everything is well. That's the only thing we wanted to make us quite happy."

She looked at me as she held my hand. And as we sat waiting, some one opened the door; and old Laurent, from the Ville de Metz, with two great baskets with handles, in which the dishes were ranged in a fair row, one over another, called out from the passage—

"Mons. Goulden, here's the dinner."

"Very well," answered Mons. Goulden, "arrange it on the table for us yourself."

Then Laurent put the small radishes, and the fricasseed chicken, on the table, and on the right a fat goose, and on the left the beef that we ourselves had put into a dish with parsley; he also produced a good dish of sour-cROUT, with small sausages, which he placed near the soup-tureen, so that our room had never seen such a dinner laid out.

Directly afterwards we heard the old gravedigger and Zebedee coming upstairs; Father Goulden and I went to meet him, and Mons. Goulden, embracing Zebedee, said to him—

"I am delighted to see you! Yes, I know what a good comrade you showed yourself to Joseph, in the midst of the greatest perils."

Then he pressed the old gravedigger's hand, and said to him—

"Father Zebedee, I think you happy in possessing such a son."

And then Catharine came up to us, and said to Zebedee—

"I cannot please Joseph better than by kissing you. You wanted to carry him at Hanau, when your own strength was gone. I look on you as a brother."



Zebedee, who had turned quite pale, kissed Catharine without replying; and then we went into the room in silence, Catharine, Zebedee, and I; Father Goulden and the old gravedigger followed us. Aunt Grethel was still arranging the dishes; and then she cried out--

"You are welcome, you are welcome! Those who were together in misfortune have now met in joy. The Lord extends His loving-kindness over all the world."

She embraced Zebedee, who said to her with a smile--

"You are brisk and well as ever, Madame Grethel; it's a pleasure to see you."

"Come, Father Zebedee, do you sit here, at the head of the table," cried Mons. Goulden joyously; "and you, Zebedee, come here, so that I may have you on my right and left; and further off, Joseph, opposite Catharine and next to Zebedee; and Madame Grethel at the lower end, to superintend."

Every one was pleased with his place. Zebedee looked at me with a smile, as if to say—"If we had had the quarter of such a dinner at Hanau, we should not have fallen down by the wayside!" In fact, joy and good appetite appeared in every face. Father Goulden presently, with a grave face, dipped the great silver ladle into the soup under the eyes of the guests. First he helped the old gravedigger, who sat quite silent, and seemed overcome by these honours; then he helped his son, and next Catharine, Aunt Grethel, me, and himself, and so the dinner began in quite a solemn way.

Zebedee looked at me every now and then, and winked his eye in a jovial manner. The first bottle was uncorked, and the glasses were filled all round. We,

drank this wine, which was table wine of a very good kind ; but there was better to come, and that's why we delayed drinking one another's healths. Then we ate a good slice of beef. The old gravedigger said—

“That's something good. This is excellent beef.”

And when he was praising the fricasseed chicken, too, I saw that Catharine was a quick-witted woman ; for she said to my comrade—

“You must know, Mons. Zebedee, that we should have invited your grandmother Margaret, too, whom I go to see every now and then ; but she's too old to get up ; and therefore, if you will allow me, as she cannot come, I want her at least to eat a bit with us, and to drink a glass of wine to her grandson's health. What do you think, Father Zebedee ?”

“Exactly,” said the old gravedigger. “I think it's just what I should like.”

Father Goulden looked at Catharine with tears in his eyes ; and as she rose to choose a nice piece he kissed her, and I heard him call her his daughter.

She went out, with a bottle and a plate. While she was gone, Zebedee said to me—

“Joseph, that girl who is to be your wife deserves every happiness. She is not only a good girl, she is not only a woman who deserves to be loved, but she deserves to be respected, for she has the wit that comes from a good heart. She guessed what my father and I were thinking of when we saw this good dinner. She saw that we should enjoy it a thousand times more if my grandmother partook of it, and that's why I shall always love her as a sister.”

And then he turned his head aside, and said to me in a low voice—

“Joseph, it is at such times as these one feels the hardship of being poor ; one has not only to give one’s blood for one’s country, but because one has to do it, one leaves those at home in poverty, and sees them in that condition when one returns.”

I saw that he was getting low-spirited, so I filled his glass, and we drank, and these sorrowful thoughts passed off. Catharine came back, too, saying that the old grandmother was very much pleased, that she thanked Mons. Goulden, and said it was a happy day for her, and this put every one in spirits again. And as the dinner went on, Aunt Grethel, when she heard the bell ring for vespers, went out ; but Catharine stayed, and as the good wine had freshened us all up, we began to talk of the last campaign.

Then it was that we heard the incidents of the great march, in the retreat from behind the Rhine to Paris ; the combats of the battalion at Bibelskirchen and at Sarrebruck, where Lieutenant Baubin had swum across the river during a terrible frost, to destroy some boats that were still in the enemy’s power. ; the passage at Barbefontaine, at Courcelles, Metz, Enzelvin, Champlon, and Verdun, always retreating ; and the battle of Brienne. Already there were hardly any men left ; but on the 4th of February the battalion had been reinforced by the remnants of the 5th light infantry, and from that time it was under fire every day ; on the 5th, 6th, and 7th at Méry-sur-Seine ; on the 8th at Sezanne, where the soldiers died in the mud, having no strength left to extricate themselves ; the 9th and the 10th at Mûrs, where Zebedee, at night, buried himself in the manure-heap at a farm, for the sake of the warmth ; on the 11th the terrible battle of Marché, where Com-

mandant Philippe had been wounded by a bayonet thrust ; the 12th and 13th, the passage at Montmirail ; the 14th, the battle of Beauchamp ; the 15th and 16th, the retrograde movement upon Montmirail, whither the Prussians had come back ; the combats of La Ferté-Gauché, of Gouarre, of Qué-à-train, of Neufchettes, and so on. When the Prussians had been beaten, up came the Russians ; and after the Russians came the Austrians, Bavarians, Wurtembergers, Hessians, Saxons, and Badeners.

I have often heard this campaign of France related, but never as Zebedee told it. When he spoke, his great thin face trembled, his long nose seemed to go down over his yellow moustache, and his eyes were clouded ; he stretched out his hand, in his old ragged sleeve, and one seemed to see before one what he described ; one could see the great plains of Champagne, where the villages were smoking to right and left ; women, children, and old men going about in bands, half naked, one carrying an old palliasse, another some old pieces of furniture on a cart, while the snow came pelting down, and the cannon boomed in the distance, and the Cossacks galloped to and fro like the wind, with kitchen pots and pans, and even old clocks, hanging to their saddles, crying—

“ Hourra ! ”

One seemed to see these furious battles, where one fought against ten ; the desperate peasants coming to fight with their pitchforks ; and in the evening the Emperor, in the open air, sitting astride across a chair, his chin resting on his hands, leaning on his stick, opposite a little fire, with the generals standing round. Thus it was that he slept and dreamt. Terrible ideas

must have passed through his head since the days of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Wagram.

"Ah," said Zebedee, "to fight, to suffer hunger, cold, and privation, marching and countermarching — all that's nothing; but to hear women and children sighing and complaining in French, amid all the devastation, and to know that you cannot save them—that the more enemies you kill, the more will come; when you have to retreat—always to retreat—in spite of victories, in spite of courage, in spite of everything—that's what breaks your heart, Mons. Goulden!"

As we listened to him, we looked at one another; no one cared to drink, and Mons. Goulden, holding down his great head with a thoughtful air, said in a low tone—

"Yes—yes—this is the price that glory costs! It's not enough to lose one's liberty, to lose all the rights one had gained with so much pains—one must moreover be pillaged, harried, burnt and massacred by bands of Cossacks!—one must see what has not been seen for centuries—a lot of brigands laying down the law! Go on—go on; we are listening—let us know all!"

Catharine, seeing that we were low-spirited, filled the glasses.

"Come, let us drink to the health of Mons. Goulden, and to the health of Father Zebedee!" she said. "All these misfortunes are past. They will not come again."

Then we drank the healths; and Zebedee told how the battalion had again to be reconstructed on the road to Soissons, with soldiers of the 18th light infantry; how they had arrived at Meaux, where the Hospital "*de la Piété*" spread a pestilence, though it was winter

time, because of the crowds of wounded who could not be attended to.

It was horrible! But the worst of all was when he told of their arrival in Paris by the barrier of Charenton—the Empress, King Joseph, the King of Rome, the ministers, the new princes and the dukes, all the grand people hurrying away in chaises towards Blois, and abandoning the capital to the enemy, while the poor workmen in blouses, though they had nothing of the Empire but being obliged to give up their sons for it, rushed by thousands to the mayors' houses, calling for arms to defend the honour of France, while the Old Guard drove them back with the bayonet! Then all at once Father Goulden cried out—

“That’s enough—that will do, Zebedee. Let us change the subject; better talk of something else!”

He had grown quite pale all at once. But just then Mother Grethel came back from vespers; and seeing us sitting mute, and Mons. Goulden quite disturbed, she asked—

“Well, what is going on here?”

“We were talking of the Empress, and of the Emperor’s ministers,” answered Mons. Goulden, with a strange kind of laugh.

“Ah, then I don’t wonder if your wine disagrees with you!” she replied. “As for me, if ever I chance to think of it, and to look into the glass, I see that it turns me quite green. Ah, the rascals! Fortunately they are gone.”

Zebedee looked downcast; Mons. Goulden noticed it, and cried out—

“Never mind, France is still a great and glorious country. If the new nobles are worth no more than

the old ones, at any rate the people are firm. Let them do what they will, the citizens, the workmen, and the peasants stand together; they have the same interests; they will not let go what they have got, and won't let others put their feet on their necks. And now, my friends, let us walk out. It's getting late. Mother Grethel and Catharine have some way to go to get back to Quatre-Vents; Joseph will accompany them."

"No," said Catharine; "to-day Joseph must stay with his friend; we will go home alone."

"Very well, be it so; Catharine is right," said Mons. Goulden. "On such a day as this, friends ought to stay together."

So we went out, arm-in-arm: the night was coming on. On the Place d'Armes we embraced again. My aunt and Catharine went away towards their village, and we, after taking a few turns under the great lime-trees, entered the brewery of the Wild Man, where we refreshed ourselves with good foaming beer. Mons. Goulden told us about the blockade, the attack of the tile-factory at Pernette, the sorties at Bigelberg, at the huts beyond, and the bombardment. It was then I learnt, for the first time, that he had had the management of a cannon, and that he had originated the idea of breaking up the melting-furnaces to make balls.

These histories were prolonged until the retreat sounded at ten o'clock. At last Zebedee left us to go to barracks, the old gravedigger went back into Capucin-street, and we went to bed, where we slept till eight o'clock next morning.

## CHAPTER VII.

Two days afterwards my marriage with Catharine was celebrated at Aunt Grethel's house at Quatre-Vents. Mons. Goulden represented my father; I had chosen Zebedee for my best man; and some old comrades, who had remained in the battalion, were also at the wedding.

Next day Catharine and I had already taken up our quarters at Mons. Goulden's, in the two little rooms above the workshop.

Many years have rolled by since then. Mons. Goulden, my aunt, and my comrades have disappeared from this world. Catharine's hair is quite white; but often, still, when I look at her, these old times come back to me; she seems to sit before me as she was at twenty years of age, fair and rosy; I see her arranging our flowerpots along the window-sills above; I hear her singing in a low voice; I see the sun opposite shining on her; and I fancy myself, coming with her down the little steep staircase; and then we come into the workroom together and cry, "Good morning, Mons. Goulden," and he turns round, smiling, and answers, "Good morning, my children; good morning." He kisses Catharine, who sets about sweeping, rubbing the furniture, putting the pot on the fire, while we arranged the work we had to do during the day. Ah, what good times they were! what a happy life! what joy! what satisfaction to be young, to have a simple,



good, industrious wife ! How your whole soul seems to rejoice ! How one sees the future extending before one —far, far ! We shall never be old—we shall always love one another—we shall always keep those we love about us—we shall always have courage—we shall always go out walking arm-in-arm on Sundays at Bonne-Fontaine ! We shall always sit down on the mossy banks in the wood, and listen to the bees and the cockchafers humming round the great trees that glisten in the light. We shall always smile—what a life ! what a happy life ! And then in the evening, when we went quietly home, and saw the long streaks of gold that extended along the sky, from Wechem to the forest of Mittelbronn, we used to look at them in silence, holding each other by the hand, when the little bell of Phalsbourg began to sound the “Angelus,” and all the bells of the villages replied throughout the country, which was already growing dark. Ah, youth !—ah, life !—everything is still present before me, at this day, as it was forty years ago. Other larks and other linnets build their nests in spring ; other blossoms whiten the great apple-trees. Can we indeed have changed so much ? Have we really grown old, as others were old in our day ? This alone would be enough to make me believe that we shall grow young again, that we shall love each other again, and that we shall meet Father Goulden, Aunt Grethel, and all the other worthy people once more. But for this, it would be too miserable to grow old. God would not give us this trial without hope. Catharine thinks so too.

So at last we were quite happy, and everything appeared to us in rosy colours ; nothing could trouble our happiness.

This was the time when the allies, by hundreds of

thousands, infantry, cavalry, and artillery, on foot and on horseback, with oak leaves on their helmets and shakos, and in the muzzles of their muskets, and at the points of their lances, were passing by the town to return home. They uttered cries of joy that could be heard a mile away, as the cries of the finches, thrushes, and thousands of other birds of heaven are heard in the pairing season. At another time this would have troubled me, because it was a sign of our defeat; but then I consoled myself by thinking, "Let them go, and may they never come again!" And then Zebedee came and told me that every day Russian, Austrian, Prussian, and Bavarian officers crossed the town to see our commandant, Mons. de la Faisanderie, an old emigrant, who loaded them with honours—that such and such an officer of the battalion had challenged one of these strangers; that another, a half-pay officer, had killed two or three of them in duels, at the Roulette, or the Green Tree, or the Basket of Flowers, for there were duels everywhere. Our people could not bear the sight of the enemy; everywhere there was throwing down of coats on the grass, and the hospital stretchers were always going to and fro. When Zebedee told me these things, or told us how so and so many officers had been put on half-pay, that their places might be filled by others from Coblentz; that the soldiers were to be compelled to be present at mass in full dress; that the curés were everything, and that the epaulette was nothing now, instead of worrying myself, I used to say to myself—

"Bah! bah! it will all settle down in the end—if only we remain at peace, if only we can live and work in quiet, that's the principal thing."

I did not consider that, to keep the peace, it is not enough to be content oneself, but that others must be content also. I was like Aunt Grethel, who thought all went excellently when once we were married. She often came to see us, bringing a basket full of fresh eggs, fruits, vegetables, and cakes, for our housekeeping, and she would say—

“Eh, Mons. Goulden, one need not ask if the children are well; one has only to look at them.”

And she used also to say to me—

“Eh, Joseph, it’s a better thing to be married, is it not, than to be trudging with a bag and a musket on the way to Lützen?”

“Yes, yes, Mother Grethel, I believe you,” I would reply, with a laugh that came from my heart.

Then she would sit down, with her hands on her knees, and say—

“All that comes of the peace . . . the peace makes every one happy—and to think that a set of beggars and ragged rascals should still dare to cry out against the king!”

At first Mons. Goulden, seated at his work, would say nothing in reply; but if she went on long in this way, he said—

“Come, come, Mother Grethel, be calm. What the deuce! You know that opinion is free now; we have two chambers, we have a constitution, and every one may have his opinion.”

“That’s true, too,” quoth my aunt, looking aside at me with a malicious air. “In the other man’s time we were obliged to hold our tongues; and that shows another difference.”

Mons. Goulden did not carry it on further, for he

considered my aunt a good woman, but one whom it was not worth while to convert. He even smiled when she did not cry out too loud; and so things went on without any disagreement,—when something new occurred.

First there came an order from Nancy, to force people to shut the fronts of their shops during mass on Sunday; the Jews and the Lutherans were obliged to close, like the rest. From that time there was no more noise in the inns and wine-shops; everything was like dead in the town during mass and vespers; people said nothing, but looked at each other as if they were afraid.

On the Sunday when our shop-front was closed for the first time, as we were dining in the shade, Father Goulden, who seemed downcast, said—

“I had hoped, my children, that all was over, that good sense would be maintained, and that we should have quiet for years; but I see unfortunately that these Bourbons are a kind of Dagoberts. All this has a queer look about it.”

He said no more on that Sunday, and went out in the afternoon to read the gazettes. All the people who knew how to read, used, while the peasants were at mass, to go and read the newspapers, after closing their shops. From that time it was that the citizens and the master artisans got into the habit of reading the newspapers; and a little while afterwards, they even wanted to have a casino.

I remember that every one was talking of Benjamin Constant, and that great confidence was placed in him. Mons. Goulden thought highly of him, and as he had got into the habit of going out every evening to read

what was going on, at Father Colin's, we thus heard the news. He would say to us—

“The Duke of Angoulême is at Bordeaux, the Count of Artois is at Marseilles; they promise this; they have said that.”

Catharine was more curious than I; she was fond of hearing news about the country, and when Mons. Goulden said anything, I could see in her eyes that she considered he was right.

One evening he said to us—

“The Duke of Berry is coming here.”

We were very much astonished.

“What is he going to do here, Mons. Goulden?” asked Catharine.

“He is coming to review the regiment,” he answered with a smile. “I am curious to see him. The papers say that he is like Bonaparte, but that he is much more clever. That's not to be wondered at in a legitimate prince; if he had not more cleverness than the son of a peasant, how unfortunate that would be! But you, Joseph, who know the other one, you will be able to judge of the affair.”

It may be imagined how this news woke up the country round about. From that day nothing was thought of but erecting triumphal arches and making white flags. All the villagers from the environs were to come on carts ornamented with garlands. A triumphal arch was erected at Phalsbourg, and another on the hill of Saverne. This happened at the end of the month of September. Every day Catharine and I, in the evening after supper, used to go and see how the triumphal arch was getting on. It was between the Ville de Metz Hotel and the confectioner Durr's house,

on the road. The old carpenter Ulrich and his lads were building it; it was like a great gate, which they covered with garlands of oak-leaves, and on the façades magnificent white flags were unfurled.

While that work was being finished, Zebedee came to see us two or three times. The prince was to come by way of Metz. Letters were received in the regiment, letters which represented him as being as severe as though he had gained fifty battles. But what vexed Zebedee more than anything was that the prince called our old officers, officers of fortune.

At last he arrived, on the 1st October, at six o'clock in the evening. They were already firing cannon when he was still on the Gerberhoff Slope. He alighted at the Ville de Metz, without passing under the triumphal arch. The square was crowded with officers in full-dress uniform. From every window there were shouts of "Vive le roi! Vive le Duc de Berry!" just as in Napoleon's time they used to cry, "Vive l'Empereur!"

Mons. Goulden, Catharine, and I could not get near, so great was the crowd; but we saw the chaises and the horses go past. A sentry barred the road towards our house.

That same evening the duke received the corps of officers. He deigned to accept a dinner that the officers of the 6th offered him, but he only invited Colonel Zaepfel in return.

After the dinner, which lasted till ten o'clock, the notables gave him a ball at the college. All the officers, all the friends of the Bourbons, in black coats, with white silk small-clothes and stockings, went there with the prince; and young ladies of good family, in white dresses, were to be found there in crowds. I seem still

to hear, in the middle of the night, the horses of the cortège passing by, and the thousand cries of "Vive le roi! Vive le Duc de Berry!"

All the windows were illuminated, and before those of the town-commandant was to be seen a great sky-blue escutcheon; the crown and the three lilies shone upon it in the darkness. The music of the regiment echoed from the great hall of the college. Mademoiselle Brémer, who had a very fine voice, was to have sung to the prince the song of "Vive Henri Quatre!" But all the town knew next morning that she had been, as it were, dazzled at the sight of the prince, so that she had not been able to get out a single word, and everybody was repeating—

'Poor Mademoiselle Felicité! poor Mademoiselle Felicité!'

The ball was kept up all night. Mons. Goulden, Catharine, and I had been asleep for a long time when we were awoke towards three o'clock in the morning by the hussars clattering by, and by cries of "Vive le Duc de Berry!" These princes must have good constitutions to go to all these balls and all these dinners that people offer them on their way. It must be very wearisome to them, especially after a time, when people call them "Your majesty," "Your dignity," "Your excellence," "Your grace," "Your worship," and, in fact, every extraordinary name they can invent to make them believe they adore them, and look upon them as gods. Yes, if at last they despise men, it's not to be wondered at; if any one were to do as much to us, we too should at last think that we were eagles.

But what I have just related is the exact truth, and I have not said too much.

Next day it began again, so to speak, with new enthusiasm. The weather was very fine ; but as the prince had slept badly, and had been much wearied at seeing these little citizens, who tried unsuccessfully to imitate the court, and perhaps because he thought that people did not cry, "Vive le roi! Vive le Duc de Berry!" enough, for the soldiers kept silence, he was in a very bad humour.

That day I saw him very well during the review at the side of the square ; and Mons. Goulden, Catharine, and I were at Witmann's, the leatherseller's, on the first floor, and during the benediction of the flag, and the "Te Deum" in the church, we also saw him, for we had the fourth bench opposite the choir. They said that he was like Napoleon, but that was not true ; he was a plain, short, thickset man, with cheeks pale from fatigue, and not lively at all, but quite the contrary. During all the ceremony he did nothing but yawn and balance himself to and fro on his hips slowly, like a clock. I tell you what I saw myself ; and that shows how blind people are, and how they want to find out likenesses everywhere.

During the review, I also recollected how the Emperor used to come on horseback, and see at a glance if everything was in order ; while the duke came towards the ranks on foot, and even reproved old soldiers once or twice, looking at them in a haughty way. That was the worst of all. He looked at Zebedee in that manner, and Zebedee never forgave him for it.

So much for the review. But a graver thing was the distribution of crosses and fleurs-de-lis. When I tell you that all the mayors, the deputies, the councillors of Baraques d'en Haut, and of Baraques des



Bois-de-Chênes, of Holdesloh, and Hirschland received the decoration of the fleur-de-lis, because they marched at the head of their village with the white flag; and that Pinacle, because he had arrived first with the music of the Bohemian Waldteufel, who played before him "Vive Henri Quatre," and five or six other white flags, larger than all the rest, received the cross of the Legion of Honour—when I tell you that, you may imagine what respectable people thought; it was a complete scandal.

In the afternoon, towards four o'clock, the prince departed for Strasbourg, accompanied by all the royalists in the province, riding, some on good horses, and others, like Pinacle, on old screws. They had prepared dinner for him in the direction of Saverne.

One thing that all the Phalsbourgians of that day still remember is that the prince was already in his chaise and was being driven slowly away, when an emigrant officer, bareheaded and in uniform, began running after it, crying out in a lamentable voice that was heard all over the square—

"Bread, my prince! bread for my children!"

This made the people blush, and run away for very shame.

We had gone back into our own house in silence; Father Goulden seemed thoughtful, when Aunt Grethel arrived.

"Well, Mother Grethel," said he to her, "you ought to be pleased."

"And why?"

"Pinacle has got a decoration."

Then she turned quite green, and sat down; after a minute she said—

“That’s the most rascally thing I ever heard of. But if the prince had known how worthless Pinnacle is, Mons. Goulden, instead of giving him a cross, he’d have had him hanged.”

“That’s just the mischief,” answered Mons. Goulden. “Those people do so many things of this sort without knowing it—and when they get to know it, it will perhaps be too late.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

THUS it was that Monseigneur the Duke of Berry visited the eastern departments; his most trifling words were reported far and wide; some were loud in praise of his infinite graces, and others were silent.

After that time, the idea occurred to me more than once that all these emigrants, all these half-pay officers, all these preachers, with their processions and their expiations, would overturn everything before they had done; and some time after, at the beginning of winter, we knew that it was not only in our part of the country, but far back in Alsace also, that affairs were being mismanaged in that way.

One morning, when Father Goulden and I were at work, between eleven and twelve o'clock, each thinking his own thoughts, and while Catharine was preparing the table, I went out to wash my hands at the pump, as I was accustomed to do before dinner. An old woman was wiping her feet on the straw mat at the foot of the stairs; she shook out her skirts that were covered with mud; in her hand she held a stick, and a large chaplet hung round her neck. As I looked down on her from the top of the stairs, she began climbing up; and I saw at once, from her little eyes with the crow's feet round them, and her little mouth surrounded by numberless wrinkles, that it was Anna Marie, the pilgrim of Saint-Witt.

This poor old woman used often to bring us watches to repair, for pious persons who put confidence in her ; and Father Goulden was always glad to see her.

"Ah!" he cried, "it's Anna Marie; we'll have a good pinch of snuff together. And how is Mons. the Curé so-and-so? and how is Mons. the Vicar so-and-so? Does he keep his good looks yet? And Mons. Jacob of such-and-such a place? and the old Sacristan Niclausse? Does he ring the bells still at Dann, at Hirschland, and at Saint-Jean? He must begin to be getting very old."

"Ah, Mons. Goulden, thank you for Mons. Jacob; you know that he lost Mademoiselle Christine last year."

"What, what? Mademoiselle Christine?"

"Yes, alas!"

"What a misfortune! Well, we must remember that we are all mortal."

"Yes, Mons. Goulden; and then, one has the benefit of receiving the holy consolations of the Church."

"Certainly, certainly; that's the chief thing."

In that way they used to talk, and Father Goulden laughed quietly to himself. He knew everything that happened in the sacristy for six leagues round the town. From time to time he would give me a sly look. I had seen such looks a hundred times during my apprenticeship; but it will be understood that, on this day, Mons. Goulden was more anxious than usual to learn what was going on in the country.

"Ah, it's Anna Marie!" said he, rising; "why, how long is it since we saw you last?"

"Three months, Mons. Goulden, a good three months; I've been making pilgrimages to Saint-Witt,

to Saint-Odille, to Marienthal, and to Haslach. I had vows to pay to all the saints in Alsace, in Lorraine, and in the Vosges. At last, I have almost got through; I have only Saint-Quirin to do now."

"Ah, so much the better—your affairs are going well. I'm glad to hear it. Sit down, Anna Marie, and rest."

I could see in his eyes how pleased he was to make the old woman tell her chaplet. But it appeared that Anna Marie had business elsewhere.

"Ah, Mons. Goulden!" she said, "I cannot to-day, for the others are before me; I mean Mother Ewig, Gaspard Rosenkrantz, and Jacob Heilig. I must get as far as Saint-Quirin this evening, and I only called in to tell you that the clock at Dosenheim is out of order, and they want you to repair it."

"Pooh, pooh! you'll stay a little."

"No, I cannot; I'm very sorry, Mons. Goulden, but I must finish my round."

She had already taken up her parcel, and Mons. Goulden looked quite put out; when Catharine, who was putting the great dish of cabbage on the table, said—

"What, you are going away, Anna Marie? What are you thinking of? Here's your plate ready for you."

Then the old woman turned her head, and saw the great smoking soup-tureen, and the cabbages, which cast a savoury smell all round.

"I'm in a great hurry," she said, doubtfully.

"Bah, you've good legs," retorted Catharine, with a merry glance in Mons. Goulden's direction.

"Oh, for that, thank God my limbs are sound enough yet."

"Very well, then, sit down, and get up your strength a little ; it's a hard occupation to be always walking."

"Yes, Madame Bertha, certainly ; the fifteen pence one gets are hardly earned, I can tell you."

I set the chairs round, and said—

"Come, sit down, Anna Marie, and give me your stick."

"I must do as you wish," she replied ; "but I shall not stay long ; I will only eat a mouthful, and then I must go."

"Yes, yes, that's understood, Anna Marie," said Mons. Goulden ; "you shall not be detained long."

We had taken our places, and Mons. Goulden began to help us. Catharine glanced at me with a smile, and I said to myself, "The women are cleverer than we, after all."

I felt very glad. What can a man wish for better than to have a clever wife ? She is a real treasure ; and I've often noticed that men are very happy who let themselves be led by wives of that kind.

It may be imagined that when she was once at table, near a good stove, instead of being in the open air, with her feet in the mud, and feeling the November wind whistling through her skirts—it will be imagined, I say, that Anna Marie gave up the idea of setting out immediately. She was a good creature, and at the age of sixty-five years she still supported two little children of her son's, who had died some years before. And when one has to travel the country at that age, to receive the wind, and the rain, and the snow on one's back, to sleep in barns and stables on straw, and to eat nothing but potatoes three days out of the four, and not always as many of those as one would like—all this is not likely

to make one despise a good plateful of hot soup, a good piece of smoked bacon, with good cabbage, and two or three glasses of wine to warm one's heart! No, one must look at things as they are; the life of these poor people is a very sad one, and every one would do well to go on a pilgrimage on his own account.

Anna Marie seemed to understand the difference between being at table and being on the road; she ate with a good appetite, and seemed quite to enjoy telling us all she had heard during her last rounds.

"Yes," she said, "everything is going well now; all these processions and expiations that you have seen are nothing yet; it must increase from day to day. And you must know that there are missionaries coming among us, as they used to go among savages in the old times, to convert us, and that they come from Mons. Forbin-Janson and Mons. de Rauzan, because the corruption of the times is too great. And they are going to build up the convents again, everywhere, and the barriers are to be put back on the roads, just as before the rebellion of five-and-twenty years ago! And when the pilgrims arrive at the gates of the convents, as soon as they ring, the doors will be opened to them directly; the lay brother will bring them bowls of gravy soup, with meat in it, on ordinary days, and bowls of soup meagre, with fish, on Fridays and Saturdays, and every day in Lent. In that way piety will increase, and everybody will want to be a pilgrim. But the religious ladies of Bischofsheim have said that only the old pilgrims, who follow it from father to son, as we do, will be allowed to go on pilgrimages, because every one is to remain in his station; the peasants are to be attached to the soil, and the seigneurs are to

ave their castles back to govern them. I've heard these things myself, with my own ears, at the religious ladies', who are to have their dowries back again, because they have come back from exile, and they must have their dowries back to build up the chapel again; that's an assured thing.

"Ah, good Heaven, if it were only done, and I could have the benefit of it in my old age! I've been fasting a long time now, and my granddaughters too. I shall take them with me, I shall teach them prayers, and I shall have the consolation, at my death, to leave them a good profession."

When we heard her tell these things, contrary as they were to common sense, we were still quite moved, because she wept with pleasure, beforehand, at the thought of seeing her grandchildren begging at the gates of convents, and the lay brother bringing out soup to them.

"And you must know also," she said, "that Mons. de Rauzan and the Reverend Mons. Tarin desire that the châteaux shall be rebuilt; and that the forests, the meadows, and the fields are to be given up to the nobles, and that all the old ponds are to be filled with water provisionally, because the ponds belong to the reverend fathers, who have not time to plough, to sow, and to reap; everything must come by itself to them."

"But tell me, Anna Marie," said Father Goulden, "is all this quite sure that you are telling us? I can hardly believe that such great happiness is reserved for us."

"It is perfectly sure, Mons. Goulden," she replied. "Mons. the Count d'Artois wants to be saved, and that



he may be saved all must be put back into its right order. At Marienthal Mons. the Vicar Antoine told us the same things again last week. They are things, you see, that come from above. Only one must still have a little patience; the hearts of the people must grow accustomed to these things by preachings and expiations. Those who won't accustom themselves to them, like the Jews and the Lutherans, will be compelled. And the Jacobins——"

When she mentioned the Jacobins, Anna Marie all at once looked at Mons. Goulden, and turned red to the ears; but she recovered herself, for he was smiling.

"Among the Jacobins," she then said, "there are certainly some very good people. But the poor must live for all that. The Jacobins took the property of the poor away, and that's not right."

"But where did they take the poor people's property from, Anna Marie?"

"Listen, Mons. Goulden. The monks and the capuchins had the poor people's property, and the Jacobins divided it all amongst themselves."

"Ah, I understand, I understand," said Father Goulden. "The monks and the capuchins had your property, Anna Marie. Now I should never have guessed that."

Mons. Goulden continued to smile; and Anna Marie said—

"I knew very well that we should agree in the end."

"Yes, yes, we agree," said he kindly.

I listened to this talk without saying anything, being naturally curious to hear what was going to happen to us. It was easy to see that Anna Marie was reporting

to us what she had picked up during her last journey.

She also observed that miracles were going to begin again ; that Saint Quirinus, Saint Odille, and the rest would not work miracles under the usurper ; but that now the miracles were already beginning again ; for that the little black statue of St. John, at Korzeroth, when it saw the old prior come back from exile, had actually shed tears.

"Yes, yes, I understand," said Mons. Goulden ; "that does not astonish me ; after the expiations and processions, the saints must certainly work miracles too ; that's nothing but natural, Anna Marie, that's nothing but natural."

"Certainly, Mons. Goulden ; and when folks see the miracles their faith will return."

"That's clear, that's clear."

The dinner was over by this time. Anna Marie, seeing that nothing more appeared, remembered that she was behind time, and exclaimed—

"Good Heavens, there's one o'clock striking ; and the others must be almost at Eschewiller by this time. I must bid you farewell now."

She had got up, and seized her stick with an important air of business.

"Well, a happy journey to you, Anna Marie," said Mons. Goulden ; "and don't let us wait so long for you next time."

"Ah, Mons. Goulden," she said, at the door, "it's not my fault that I don't sit at your table every day."

She laughed, and added, as she took up her parcel—

"Good-bye till we meet again ; and for the good you have done me I will pray to the blessed Quirinus to

send you a big boy, as red and fresh as a pippin. You see, Madame Bertha, that's all a poor old woman like me can do."

When I heard these pleasant words, I said to myself, "This poor old Anna Marie is a good soul, after all. What she has been talking about is just what I wish most in the whole world. May Heaven hear her!"

I was quite moved by this good wish. Then she went downstairs, and when we heard her shutting the door below behind her, Catharine began laughing, and said—

"This time she has unloaded her budget well."

"Yes, my children," replied Mons. Goulden, who looked quite pensive; "that's what may be called human ignorance. One would think that poor old creature invented all this; unfortunately she picks it all up, right and left; it is word for word what the emigrants think, and what their journals are repeating day by day, and what the preachers are preaching openly in all the churches. Louis XVIII. is in their way; he has too much good sense to please them; their real king is Monseigneur the Count of Artois, who wants to be saved; and in order that monseigneur may do that, it is necessary that everything should be put back into the state it was in before the rebellion of five-and-twenty years ago. It is requisite that the national lands should be restored to their old proprietors; it is necessary that the nobility shall have their privileges, as in 1788, and shall engross all grades of command in the army; it is necessary that the Catholic and Apostolic religion shall be the only religion in the state; Sunday and the saints' days must be observed; and it is necessary that heretics be driven out

from all offices, and that the priests alone give instruction to the children of the people; it is necessary that this great and terrible nation, which for five-and-twenty years has carried its ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity through all the world, by means of good sense and of victories, and which would never have been vanquished if the Emperor had not made an alliance with the kings at Tilsit; it is necessary that this nation, which in a few years has produced as many great captains, orators, learned men and geniuses of all kinds, as the noble families have produced in two thousand years, should yield up everything, and be set to scratching the earth again; while the others, who are not one to a thousand of the people, gorge themselves from generation to generation, and live easy lives at the people's expense! Oh, most certainly the fields and meadows and ponds will be given up, as Anna Marie has said, and the people will build up the castles again, and the convents; there can be no doubt about that; to be agreeable to Mons. the Count of Artois, and help him to carry out his intentions, that's the best the people can do . . . . such a great prince as that!"

Then Father Goulden clasped his hands and looked at the ceiling, and he said—

"Oh, Heaven! that has caused the little black St. John of Kortzeroth to work so many miracles, if thou couldst but make one single ray of common sense enter the heads of monseigneur and his friends, I think this would be finer still than the tears of the little saint! And that other man, yonder in his island, with his clear eyes, he's like a hawk, making believe to sleep, while he sees geese dabbling about in a pond—remem-

ber that five or six beats of his wings would bring him upon them ; the geese will fly away, but we shall have all Europe upon our shoulders once more."

He said these words with a grave air, and I looked at Catharine, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. All at once he sat down and said—

"Come, Joseph, all this is not cheerful ; but what are we to do ? It's time to sit down to our work again. Just look and see what's the matter with Mons. le Curé Jacob's watch."

Then Catharine took away the cloth, and we settled to work again.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE winter had come. It was a rainy winter, with intervals of snow and wind. In those days, the roofs were not yet provided with gutters; the rain used to drop from the tiles, and the wind blew it into the middle of the streets. The plashing was heard all day long, while the stove hummed, and Catharine moved about around us, looking to the fire, now and then lifting up the covers of the saucepans, and at intervals singing in a low voice as she sat at her wheel. Father Goulden and I had become so accustomed to this kind of life, that our work was done, so to speak, without our thinking of it. We had nothing to disturb ourselves about. The table was always laid, and the dinner served, at twelve o'clock precisely. It was real family life.

In the evening, Mons. Goulden used to go out after supper, to read the *Gazette* at Hoffmann's Café, with his old cloak well drawn up over his shoulders, and his great fox-skin cap drawn down over his ears. In spite of these precautions, sometimes, after ten o'clock at night, when we were already in bed, we heard him come back coughing, when he had got his feet wet. Then Catharine said to me—

“He's coughing now; he thinks himself as young as when he was twenty years old.”

And in the morning she did not hesitate to scold him.

"Mons. Goulden," she would say, "you are not prudent. You have a bad cold, and you go out every evening."

"What would you have, my child?" he would answer. "I've got into the habit of reading the newspaper now; the habit has got the better of me. I'm always wanting to know what Benjamin Constant and the rest of them say. It's like a second life to me, and often I think 'They might have mentioned this thing or that. If Melchior Goulden had been there, he would have enlarged on such and such a theme, and that could not have failed to produce a great effect.'"

Then he would shake his head, and laugh, as he said—

"Every one thinks he has more cleverness and good sense than other people; but I'm always pleased with Benjamin Constant."

We did not know what to answer, for his love for the newspaper was too great. But one day Catharine said to him—

"Mons. Goulden, if you want to hear the news now, that's no reason why you should make yourself ill. Why don't you do like the old carpenter Carabin? He made an arrangement, last week, with Father Hoffmann, who sends him the newspaper after seven o'clock, when the others have read it, for payment of three francs a month. In this way, without putting himself to any trouble, Carabin knows all that is going on, and his wife, old Bebel, too; they talk over these matters between themselves, in the chimney corner, and argue together about them; and that's what you ought to do."

"Well, do you know, Catharine, that's a famous

idea," said Mons. Goulden. "But, you see—three francs!"

"The three francs are nothing," I then struck in; "the chief thing is, not to get ill. You cough every evening like an invalid, and this must not go on."

These words of mine, far from vexing him, pleased him; for he saw that we spoke from affection for him, and that he ought to listen to us.

"Very well," he said, "we will try to arrange matters as you wish. I'm the more ready, because a crowd of officers on half-pay fill the cafés from morning till night, passing the *Gazette* about to each other, so that one has to wait two hours sometimes before one can get hold of it. Yes, Catharine is right."

And that very day he went to see Father Hoffmann about it; and the end was that Michel, one of the waiters at the café, used to bring us the *Gazette* every evening after seven o'clock, just as we rose from table. Each time we heard him coming upstairs it was a real pleasure to us; and we all said—

"Here comes the *Gazette*!"

Then we would get up from table. Catharine made haste to take away the cloth, and put everything in order; I would put a good large log in the fire; Mons. Goulden took his spectacles from their case, and while Catharine knitted, and I smoked my pipe like an old soldier, watching the flame dancing in the stove, he used to read us the news from Paris. No one can imagine how glad we were to find Benjamin Constant and two or three others upholding what we ourselves thought to be right. Sometimes Mons. Goulden was obliged to pause to wipe his spectacles, and then Catharine would exclaim—



"How well those people speak ! Those are what one may call sensible men ! Yes, what they maintain is just—it's the simple truth !"

Both of us approved. Father Goulden only used to think that this or that subject might have been mentioned, but that what was said was good. Then he would continue his reading, which lasted till ten o'clock ; and then we would go to bed, thinking of what we had heard.

Outside, the wind whistled as it whistles at Phalsbourg ; the weathercocks turned creaking in their sockets, and the rain beat against the walls ; and we, warm and comfortable, listened to it, thanking Heaven for our shelter, till sleep came and made us forget everything. Ah, how sweetly one sleeps, and how happy one is, when the mind is at rest, and one has strength and health, and the love and respect of those whom one loves ! What can one wish for more in this world ? Days, weeks, and months passed away in this manner ; we became in a certain way politicians ; and when the ministers were going to speak, we used to think beforehand—

" Ah ! the rascals, they're going to deceive us ; ah ! the bad race—they ought to be driven away, every one of them."

Catharine especially could not endure these people ; and when Mother Grethel came and spoke to us as she used to do about our good king Louis XVIII., we used to let her have her say out of respect for her, but we pitied her for being so blind concerning the affairs of the country.

It must be remarked, moreover, that these emigrants, ministers, and princes behaved towards us like down-

right insolent people. If Mons. the Count of Artois and his sons had put themselves at the head of the Bretons, if they had marched upon Paris and gained the victory, they would have had a right to say to us : " We are your masters, and we lay down the law for you." But to have been driven away in the first instance, and then to have been brought back by the Prussians and the Russians, and then to set about humiliating us, that was a very disagreeable thing ! The older I grow the more certain I feel of that ; it was shameful !

Zebedee, too, used to come and see us from time to time, and he knew everything we read in the *Gazette*. He it was who first told us how some young emigrants had driven General Vandamme from the presence of the king. That old soldier, who had come home from a Russian prison, and whom all the army respected, in spite of his misfortune at Kulm, had been led out by them, they telling him that this was no place for him. Vandamme had been colonel of a regiment quartered at Phalsbourg ; all the town knew him ; and no one can describe the indignation the honest people felt at this news.

It was Zebedee, too, who told us that lawsuits were being carried on against the half-pay officers, and that their letters were stolen in the post-office, to try and make them appear as traitors. A little while afterwards he told us that the officers' daughters at the school of St. Denis were to be sent away with a pension of two hundred francs each ; and afterwards, that the émigrés wanted to have the sole right of sending their sons to the schools of St. Cyr and La Fesche, whence they were to emerge as officers ; while the people were to remain common soldiers at a halfpenny a day, for all time to come.

The gazettes told the same tale, but Zebedee knew a number of particulars; every one of the soldiers knew all about it. I could never describe to you Zebedee's face, as he sat by the stove, with his black short pipe in his mouth, telling us these abominations; his great nose used to grow quite white, the lids twitched at the corners of his light grey eyes, and from time to time he would affect to laugh, muttering—

“It's going on—it's going on!”

“And what do the other soldiers think of all this?” asked Mons. Goulden.

“Why, they think it's going on well. When one has spilt one's blood for France during twenty years—when one has seen ten, or fifteen, or twenty campaigns, has got three stripes and is covered with wounds, it's a cheerful thing, Father Goulden, to hear that one's old chiefs are being sent away, that their daughters are being turned out, and that the sons of those men are going to be officers for ever.” And as he said this, his cheeks trembled, up to his ears.

“Certainly, certainly, it's unfortunate,” said Father Goulden, “but discipline must always be kept up; the marshals obey the ministers, the officers obey the marshals, and the soldiers the officers.”

“You are right,” answered Zebedee. “But they're beating the tattoo.”

And then he would shake hands with us, and run off hastily to the barracks.

Thus the whole winter passed away. The indignation became greater from day to day. The town was full of half-pay officers who dared no longer stay in Paris—lieutenants, captains, commandants, colonels of all the infantry and cavalry regiments; people who

lived on a small glass of spirits and a crust of bread, and who were the more unhappy inasmuch as they had to keep up appearances. Fancy men of this kind, with hollow cheeks, close-cut hair, their eyes flashing, with their great moustaches, and their old regulation great-coats, the buttons of which they had been obliged to change. Fancy them walking about three, or six, or ten in a group, on the great square, with great sword-sticks hanging from their button-holes, and their great cocked hats set square across their shoulders, always well brushed, but so worn and shabby that you thought at once they could not have a quarter enough to eat. Still you could not help saying to yourself—"These are the victors of Jemmapes, Fleurus, Zurich, Hohenlinden, Marengo, Austerlitz, Friedland, and Wagram; if we are proud of being Frenchmen, it's not the Count of Artois or the Duke of Berry or of Angoulême who can boast of being the cause of our pride, but those men yonder. And now they're left to perish, and the very bread is refused them, while emigrants are put in their places. It's really an abomination." It did not need for a man to have much good sense, or kindness, or justice to see that this was against nature.

For my part, I could not bear to see these wretched people; it made my heart ache. When a man has served, if it be only for six months, the feeling of respect for his old chiefs, for those whom he has seen in the front, in the fire, always remains with him. I was ashamed of my country for suffering such scandalous things to be done.

One thing that I shall never forget is how, at the end of the month of January, 1815, two of these half-pay officers, one of them tall and thin, his head already grey,

known by the name of Colonel Falconette, and who seemed to have served in the infantry, the other short and thick-set, who was called Commandant Margarot, and still wore his whiskers hussar-fashion—how these two men came and offered to sell us a signet watch. It was about ten o'clock in the morning. I think I see them now, entering gravely, the colonel in his high collar, and the other with his head sunk deep between his shoulders. Their watch was a gold one, in a double case, a repeater; it marked the seconds, and only required winding up once a week. I had never seen such a beauty. Mons. Goulden was examining it. I turned round on my chair, and looked at the two men, who seemed terribly in want of money; the hussar especially, with his brown bony face, his great reddish moustache, his little brown eyes, his broad shoulders, and his long arms hanging down by his sides, inspired me with profound respect. I thought, "When that man held his hussar's sabre with that long arm stretched out, he could reach far; his little eyes must have flashed under his thick eyebrows; he could cut and thrust like lightning." I pictured him to myself in a charge, half-hidden behind the head of his horse, with his point well forward, and then my admiration increased still more.

I then suddenly remembered that Commandant Margarot and Colonel Falconette had killed Austrian and Russian officers in duels behind the Green Tree, and that all the town had been talking of them five months before, when the allies passed through. And then the tall colonel, with no shirt-collar round his neck, thin, dull, and pale as he looked, with his grey hair and cold manner, seemed to me very respectable.

I waited to hear what Father Goulden would say

about their watch. He kept his eyes fixed upon it with a kind of profound admiration, while the two men waited with a quiet look, but still with the appearance of people ill at ease, and unable to hide their embarrassment

At last Mons. Goulden said—

“This, gentlemen, is a beautiful piece of workmanship; it’s what one may call a watch for a prince.”

“Certainly,” replied the hussar; “and it is from a prince that I received it, after the battle of Rabbe.”

He looked at the other, who said nothing.

Then Mons. Goulden, looking more attentively at them, saw that they were in great distress. Then he took off his black silk cap, and slowly rose, and said—

“Gentlemen, don’t be offended at what I am going to say, for I am, like yourselves, an old soldier. I have served France under the Republic, and I can understand that it must be a real heartbreak to be obliged to sell an article of this kind, an article that reminds us of a fine action in our life, and recalls the memory of a chief who is dear to us.”

I had never heard Father Goulden speak with so much emotion. He stood with his bald head bent down in a mournful way, and his eyes fixed on the ground, as if to avoid seeing the sorrow of those to whom he spoke. The commandant had turned quite red, his little eyes appeared clouded, and his great fingers twitched; the colonel had become as pale as death. I should have liked to go away.

Mons. Goulden went on, and said—

“This watch is worth more than a thousand francs. I have not this sum in hand just now, and, moreover,

I should greatly regret depriving you of such a remembrance. This is the offer I therefore make you. If you like the watch shall remain in my shop-front; it will still be yours, and I will advance you two hundred francs, which you can return to me when you come to take it away."

On hearing this the hussar stretched out his great hairy hands, as if he would have embraced Father Goulden.

"You are a good patriot!" he cried out. "Colin told us so! Ah, monsieur, I shall never forget the service you are doing me! That watch—I received it from Prince Eugene for a daring act, and I value it like my own life-blood! But poverty——"

"Commandant!" cried the other, with a white face.

But the hussar would not listen to him; he put him aside with his hand and went on—

"No, colonel, let me speak—we are among ourselves; an old soldier may hear me. They are starving us!—they are treating us like Cossacks!—only they are too cowardly to shoot us!"

His voice rang through the whole house. For me, I had run into the kitchen with Catharine to escape the mournful sight. Mons. Goulden tried to pacify him, and we listened.

"Yes, I know all that, gentlemen," he said; "I can put myself in your position."

"Come, Margarot, be calm," said the colonel.

The voices went on for a quarter of an hour. At last we heard Mons. Goulden count the money, and the hussar saying—

"Thank you, monsieur—thank you! If ever occasion should arise, remember Commandant Margarot!"

And presently the door opened, and they came downstairs, of which we were very glad, Catharine and I, for our hearts ached. We went back into the room. Mons. Goulden, who had been showing the officers downstairs, came up again almost directly, bareheaded. He was quite upset.

"Those unhappy people are right," he said, as he put on his cap; "the conduct of the Government towards them is horrible; but these things will have to be paid for, sooner or later."

All the rest of that day we felt melancholy. Nevertheless, Mons. Goulden explained to me the beauties of the watch, and told me that one ought always to have such models before one's eyes; then we hung the watch up in our frame.

From that moment the idea continually haunted me that this would end badly, and that even if they stopped now, the emigrants had already gone too far. I always seemed to hear the voice of the commandant in our room, crying out that we were behaving to the army like Cossacks. The remembrance of the processions, the expiations, the preachings about the rebellion of twenty-five years before and of the restitution of the national property, the re-establishment of the convents, and all the rest of it, seemed to me a horrible mess out of which nothing good could arise.



## CHAPTER X.

SUCH was the state of affairs, when, at the beginning of the month of March, the report came rushing abroad like a whirlwind that the Emperor had landed at Cannes. Whence did this report come? No one has ever been able to say. Phalsbourg is two hundred leagues distant from the sea; many a plain and many a mountain separate it from the south. For me, I can remember an extraordinary circumstance about it.

On the 5th of March, on getting up, I had opened the window of our little room, which jutted out from the roof. I looked at the black chimneys of Baker Spitz, opposite, behind which a little snow still clung; the cold was sharp, but still the sun shone, and I thought—"That's what I call fine weather for marching!" I remembered how glad we used to be in Germany, after we had put out our fires at dawn of day, to start in such weather as this, our muskets on our shoulders, and to hear the tramp of the men's boots on the hardened earth. And I know not how it was, but all at once the thought of the Emperor came into my head: I saw him before me with his grey overcoat, his round back, his hat pressed down low over his forehead, marching along, with the Old Guard behind him. Catharine was sweeping out our room. It passed before me like a dream, on that clear, cold morning.

While I stood there, we heard some one coming upstairs, and Catharine, stopping short, said—

“That’s Mons. Goulden.”

Immediately I recognised Mons. Goulden’s footsteps ; to my great surprise, for he hardly ever came up into our room. He opened the door, and said to us, almost in a whisper—

“My children, the Emperor landed at Cannes, near Toulon, on the first of March ; and he is marching on Paris.”

He said no more, but sat down to get breath. You may imagine how we looked at each other. After a minute’s pause, Catharine said—

“Is it in the gazette, Mons. Goulden ?”

“No,” he replied ; “they don’t know anything about it yet over yonder, or else they are hiding it all from us. But, in Heaven’s name, don’t breathe a word of all this, for we should be arrested ! This morning, Zebedee, who has been posting the guard at the French Gate, came at about five o’clock to bring me the news. He knocked at the door below, and no doubt you heard him.”

“No, Mons. Goulden, we were asleep.”

“Well, I opened the window to see what it was, and went down to undo the bolt. Zebedee spoke of the matter as a complete certainty ; and his regiment is confined to barracks until further orders. It seems that they are afraid of the soldiers ; but if so, how are they to stop Bonaparte ? They certainly cannot send against him the peasants, whose land they want to take away, nor the townspeople, whom they’ve been treating like Jacobins. Now here’s a good opportunity for the emigrants to distinguish themselves. But, above all things, be quite silent about all this—quite silent !”

He held up a warning hand as he said this, and we went down into the workshop. Catharine made a good fire, and we all went about our work as usual.

That day all remained quiet, and the next day too. Some neighbours, such as Father Réboe and old Offran, came to see us certainly, under the pretext of bringing their watches to be cleaned.

"Anything new, neighbour?" they asked.

"Things are keeping quiet," Mons. Goulden replied.

"Do you know of anything new?"

"No."

And yet one could see by their faces that the great news had reached them. Zebedee remained at the barracks. The half-pay officers crowded the café from morning to night, but not a word transpired: the news was too grave.

But at last, on the third day, the half-pay officers, who were fretting and fuming, began to lose patience; they might be seen going to and fro, and you only had to look in their faces to see how terribly excited they were. If they had had horses, or even weapons, I feel sure they would have attempted something; but the gendarmerie, with old Chaucel at their head, were also going to and fro; every hour an orderly gendarme was seen riding away to Sarrebourg.

The agitation increased; nobody cared to work. Soon the report was spread by some commercial travellers who had arrived at the Ville de Bâle, that the Upper Rhine and the Jura were in revolt; that regiments of cavalry and infantry were moving on, one after another, in the direction of Besançon; that masses of troops were marching against the usurper, and so on. One of these travellers, who talked too much, received

an order to quit the town instantly ; and the brigadier inspected his papers, which, fortunately for him, were in order.

I have seen other revolutions since then, but never such an agitation as this ; especially on the 8th of March, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, when the order came for the first and second battalions to set out at once, in full marching order, for Lons-le-Saulnier. Then the whole extent of the danger was understood, and everybody thought : " It won't be the Duke of Angoulême or the Duke of Berri who will stop Bonaparte, but it must be all Europe."

Moreover, the half-pay officers seemed to breathe more freely, and their faces were lit up as if with a ray of sunshine.

At five o'clock, when the first roll of drums was echoing from the square, Zebedee came in in a hurry.

" Well ?" Father Goulden called out to him.

" Well," he replied, " the first two battalions are going."

He looked quite pale.

" They're sent to arrest him," observed Mons. Goulden.

" Oh, yes, they'll arrest him," answered Zebedee, winking his eye.

The noise of the drums was still heard.

He turned and ran downstairs again, four steps at a time. Below, with his foot already on the threshold, he took hold of my arm, and raised his shako from his head. Then he whispered to me—

" Look into the crown, Joseph — do you know it again ?"

Inside the crown of the shako I saw the old tricolour cockade.

"It's ours, that one is," said he. "Well, each of the soldiers has got one."

I had only time for one look at it, when he pressed my hand and turned the corner of the Rue de Fouquet at the double. I went upstairs again, and I said to myself—

"Here's the old confusion beginning again, and Europe set by the ears; there will be the conscription, Joseph, and all permits rescinded, and so on, as they say in the gazettes. Instead of living in quiet, we shall have to turn out; instead of listening to church bells, we shall listen to cannon; instead of talking of convents, they'll have to talk about arsenals; instead of smelling incense and garlands, people will have to smell powder. Good heavens! will this never end? Everything might go on so well if it were not for the missionaries and the emigrants. What a pity!—what a pity! And it is always we who work and don't ask for anything—it's always we who have to pay. It's always for our good that all these unjust things are done, while they make a jest of us, and treat us as if we were so many logs of wood!"

Many other just thoughts passed through my head; but what was the use of it? I was not the Count of Artois or the Duke of Berri; a man must be a prince for his ideas to be worth anything—and then, indeed, every word he speaks is looked upon as a miracle.

From that moment till night came Mons. Goulden could not keep quiet a minute; he was as restless as I had been while I was awaiting the permission to marry; every instant he was looking out of window, and saying—

"To-day the great news will come—the orders have

been given. There's no need to conceal anything from us now."

And then he would be crying every minute—

"Hush! here comes the mail."

We listened, but it was only a cart or a waggon passing jingling over the bridge.

Night had come, and Catharine had laid the cloth, when, for the twentieth time, Mons. Goulden cried out—

"Listen!"

This time a distant rumbling could be heard on the outworks. Then, without waiting longer, Mons. Goulden ran into the passage, and put on his big overcoat, crying out—

"Come along, Joseph!"

He seemed to roll down the stairs in his hurry, and when I saw him so excited, the idea of hearing this news excited me too, and I ran after him. We had hardly got down the steps into the street before we saw the mail-carriage emerging from under the dark gates with its two red lamps; and presently it came rattling past us like thunder. We ran on, and we were not the only ones; on all sides people were rushing onward, and one heard them crying—

"There it is! there it is!"

The post-office was in the Rue des Foinces, near the German Gate; the mail-coach came down straight to the corner of the college, and then turned off to the right. The farther we ran, the more did the street become crowded with people; they came rushing out of every door; the former mayor, Mons. Parmentier, his secretary Eschbach, the inspector Couchois, and many other notables were running too, calling to each other, and crying—

“Now is the great moment!”

When we came to the turning by the *Place d’Armes*, I saw a crowd already standing in front of the post-office, and innumerable figures leaning over the iron railings, listening, reaching forward over each other’s heads, and questioning the courier, who gave no answer.

The postmaster, *Mons. Pernette*, opened the window that was lighted up within; the bale of letters and newspapers flew from the top of the coach into his room; the window was closed again, and sundry strokes from the postillion’s whip admonished the crowd to stand aside.

“The newspapers! the newspapers!”

Nothing but that was heard on all sides. The mail-coach started again, and quickly disappeared under the *German Gate*.

“Let us go to *Hoffmann’s Café*,” said *Mons. Goulden* to me. “Let us make haste; the papers will be there directly; and if we delay, there will be no getting in.”

As we crossed the place, we heard people already running behind us. I heard the clear voice of *Com-mandant Margarot* crying—

“Come on; I have them.”

All the half-pay officers were following him in a body; the moon was shining; one could see them coming along at a great rate. We made the best of our way into the café, and hardly were we seated in front of the great earthenware stove, when the crowd came rushing in at both the doors.

The faces of the half-pay officers at that moment were a sight to see! There they came, in their great cocked hats, swarming in under the lamps; with their

haggard features, their pendent moustaches, their gleaming eyes flashing and staring in the shadow, making them look like savage creatures hovering about their prey ; several quite glared with impatience and excitement ; and I believe they did not see a thing of what was before them, but that their minds were far away with Bonaparte. It was terrible to see them.

More and more people kept coming in, so that the place was quite stifling, and they were obliged to open the windows. Outside, the street leading to the cavalry barracks and the Place de la Fontaine were full of noises.

"We did well to come on directly," said Mons. Goulden to me, as he stood upright on his chair, with his hand resting on the great stove ; for many others had got up in the same way.

I followed his example ; and then I could see all around me nothing but attentive heads, the great hats of the officers in the middle of the hall, and the crowd waiting on the square without, in the moonlight. The tumult redoubled. Then a voice cried, "Silence."

It was Commandant Margarot, who had just mounted on a table. Behind him, under the double door, stood the gendarmes Veltz and Werner, looking on ; and outside all the windows, people were leaning and looking in. Immediately in the room, and even on the square, many voices repeated, "Silence, silence !" And then the stillness became so deep, that one would have thought the place was deserted.

The commandant read the *Gazette* aloud. His clear voice, which pronounced every word with a sort of internal tremor, reminded me of the ticking of our clock in the dead of night ; it must have been heard



to the middle of the great square. And that went on a long time; for the commandant read the whole gazette, without skipping over any part. I remember that the gazette began by stating how "the man named Buonaparte," the enemy of the public good, who during fifteen years had kept France in the servitude of despotism, had escaped from his island, and that he had had the audacity to set foot in a land inundated with blood through his fault; but that the troops, faithful to the king and faithful to the nation, were on their way to arrest him, and that perceiving the general horror he had excited, Bonaparte had betaken himself to the mountains with the handful of traitors who accompanied him, that he was surrounded on all sides, and must infallibly be taken prisoner.

I also remember that, according to this gazette, all the marshals had hastened to put their glorious swords at the service of the king, the father of the people, and of the nation; and that the illustrious Marshal Ney, Prince of the Moskowa, had kissed his hand, and promised to bring Bonaparte to Paris, dead or alive.

After that came some Latin words, which I did not understand, and which had no doubt been inserted for the curés.

Every now and then I could hear people behind me laughing and jeering at the gazette. On turning my head, I perceived that these laughers were Professor Burguet and two or three other notables, who, after the Hundred Days, were taken up, and compelled to live at Bourges, because, as Father Goulden said, they were too clear-headed. Which shows that it is much better to hold one's tongue on such occasions as that, when one does not want to fight on either side; for words

don't make it hot or cold, and only bring disagreeables upon one.

But a much stronger thing was towards the end, when the commandant began to read the ordinances. The first spoke of the movements of the troops, the second ordered all Frenchmen to go out against Bonaparte, to arrest him, and to deliver him up dead or alive, because he had put himself out of the pale of the law. At this moment the commandant, who until now had only laughed at intervals, as he pronounced the name of Bonaparte, and whose long face, lighted up by the lamp under which he stood, had only twitched slightly now and then, as the others stood around listening to him—at this moment, I say, his whole countenance changed; I had never seen such a terrible face; his forehead seemed all to wrinkle up, his little eyes glittered like those of a cat, and his moustache and whiskers bristled up. He took the gazette and tore it into a thousand pieces; then he turned quite pale; and standing bolt upright with his long arms stretched out and raised above his head, he shouted, “Vive l'Empereur!” in a voice that made one shudder. The moment he raised this cry, all the half-pay officers raised their great hats, some in their hands, others at the end of their sword-sticks, and all cried with one voice, “Vive l'Empereur!” There was such a shout, you would have thought the roof was falling. As for me, I felt as if cold water had been poured down my back. “Now it's all up,” I said to myself. “What's the use of preaching peace to people like those?” Outside, amid the groups of citizens, the soldiers belonging to the military post at the town-hall took up the cry of “Vive l'Empereur!”. And when I looked round, in a

great fright, to see what the gendarmes would say to it, I saw that they were retiring without saying anything at all, for they were old soldiers themselves.

But all was not over yet; when the commandant prepared to come down from his table, an officer cried out that he should be borne in triumph; and in a moment some others took him by the legs and carried him round the hall, pushing the people aside before them, and shouting like madmen—"Vive l'Empereur!" For him, as he sat with his great heavy hands grasping their shoulders, his head appearing above their hats, when he found himself being carried in triumph by his comrades, and heard them repeating the shout he loved above all others, he began to weep. One could never have thought that such a face as his could weep; the sight of it was enough to upset one and make one shudder. He said nothing; his eyes were closed, and the tears ran down his haggard cheeks, over his moustache.

I was staring at him, as you may imagine, when Father Goulden pulled me by the sleeve; he had got down from his chair, and he said to me—

"Joseph, let us go, let us go; it's time."

Behind us the room was already empty, for every one had made haste to get out by the lane that led to the brewer Klein's, for fear of being entangled in a bad business; we went out the same way.

"The chances are that this will take a bad turn," said Father Goulden to me, as we crossed the square together. "To-morrow the gendarmes might take the field. Commandant Margarot and his companions are not the sort of men to let themselves be arrested; the soldiers of the third battalion will take part with

them, if they have not done so already; the town is in their hands."

He spoke these thoughts aloud to himself, and I agreed with him. At home, in our workshop, Catharine was waiting for us very anxiously. We told her what had happened. The table was laid, but nobody felt hungry. After drinking a glass of wine, and taking off his shoes, Mons. Goulden said to us—

"My children, judging by what we have just seen, the Emperor will certainly get to Paris; the soldiers desire it; the peasants, whose property has been threatened, desire it also; and as for the citizens, if he has only become reasonable by reflection in his island, and will renounce his ideas of war, and accept treaties, they will be quite willing to have him back, especially with a good constitution that shall guarantee to every man liberty, the greatest of all possessions. Let us hope so, for him and for ourselves—and good night."

## CHAPTER XL.

NEXT morning, Friday, a market-day, all the town was full of the great news. Numbers of peasants of Alsace and Lorraine, in blouses, waistcoats, in three-cornered hats and in cotton caps, arrived, in a long procession, in their carts, ostensibly to sell corn, barley, and oats, but in reality to hear what was going forward. Everywhere they could be heard crying to their horses, "Hue, Fuchs, hue, Schimmel;" and there was a great rolling of waggon-wheels and cracking of whips. The women were not far behind the men; one saw them arriving from Houpe, Dagsberg, Erchewiller, Lutzelbourg, and Baraques, with their short petticoats tucked up, and their great baskets on their heads, stepping out bravely, and making all possible haste. All these people passed in front of our windows, and Mons. Goulden said—

"What an agitation there is! How they're all running! Would not one think that the spirit of that man was in the country already? There's no more marching in slow time now of people with candles in their hands and surplices on their backs."

He seemed pleased, which showed how much all the ceremonies of late had annoyed him. At last, towards eight o'clock, we had to settle down to work, and Catharine went out, as usual, to buy our butter and

eggs and some vegetables for the week's provision. At ten o'clock she came home.

"Ah, gracious Heaven!" she said, "everything is overturned already!"

And she told us that the half-pay officers were walking about with their great sword-sticks, Commandant Margarot in the midst of them, and that on the great square, in the market building among the benches, between the stalls, everywhere, the peasants, the citizens, everybody, in fact, shook hands, offered pinches of snuff, and said—

"Aha! the affair's beginning again."

She also told us that on the previous night proclamations of Bonaparte had been stuck on the mayor's house, on the three doors of the church, and even on the pillars of the market-hall, though the gendarmes had torn them down early in the morning. In short, everything was in agitation. Father Goulden had got up from our working-bench to listen; and I thought, as I turned round on my chair—

"Yes, that's all very good, all very good, but my leave of absence will soon be over now. If everything is moving, you'll have to stir yourself too, Joseph. Instead of staying here quietly with your wife, you'll have to buckle on your knapsack and bag again, and to carry a musket, and two parcels of cartridges on your back;" and looking at Catharine, who did not perceive the ugly aspect of the thing, Weissenfels, and Lützen, and Leipsic came into my mind; and I felt melancholy.

While we sat pensively in our places, the door opened, and Aunt Grethel came in. At first one would have thought that she was in a peaceable mood.

"Good morning, Mons. Goulden; good morning, my

children," she said, as she put down her basket behind the stove.

"Do you keep well, Mother Grethel?" he asked.

"Yes, so far as health goes—so far as health goes," she answered.

I saw already that she was setting her teeth; and there were two red spots on her cheeks. With a hasty gesture she pushed back under her cap the locks of hair that hung about her ears; and then she looked sharply at us, to see what we thought. Then she broke out in a shrill voice—

"It seems that that rascal has escaped from his island."

"What rascal are you speaking of, Mother Grethel?" asked Mons. Goulden.

"Come, you know well enough whom I'm speaking of," she retorted. "I'm speaking of your Bonaparte."

Father Goulden, who saw how angry she was, had gone back to our work-bench, to try and avoid a dispute; he pretended to be examining a watch, and I imitated his example.

"Yes," she cried out, in a still louder voice, "he's going to begin his wicked doings again, when we thought it was all over—he's come back worse than ever—what a plague!"

I heard her voice tremble with anger. Mons. Goulden pretended to be going on with his work.

"Whose fault is it, Mother Grethel?" he said, without turning round. "Do you believe that these processions, these expiations, these preachings against the national property and the rebellion of twenty-five years ago, these continual threats to re-establish the old order of rule, to close the shops during service, &c., &c.—did

you believe that all that could go on? I would just ask you that. Has any one ever seen anything like it since the world existed—anything more likely to raise a nation against those who wish to revive such a system? Would one not have thought that Bonaparte himself had been whispering into the ears of these Bourbons all the foolish things that could disgust the people? Tell me—was not what has now happened to be expected?"

He kept on looking at the watch through his magnifying-glass, to keep the peace; and I watched Mother Grethel out of a corner of my eye while he was making this speech. She had changed colour two or three times, and Catharine, standing in the background near the stove, made her a sign, to beg her not to begin a quarrel in the house; but the obstinate woman cared very little for signs.

"So you are pleased, too, are you?" she said. "So you change from day to day, like the rest of them? You stick up your Republic whenever it suits you?"

When Father Goulden heard her say this he coughed two or three times, as if something had stuck in his throat; and then for two or three minutes he seemed lost in thought, while aunt, standing behind us, watched him. At last Mons. Goulden, having recovered his equanimity, answered slowly—

"You are wrong, Madame Grethel, to address such a reproach as that to me; if I had wanted to change I should have begun earlier. Instead of being a clock-maker at Phalsbourg, I might be a colonel or a general as well as another; but I have always been, and I am, and I shall continue to be till death, for the Republic and the rights of man."



Then he turned round suddenly; and looking at aunt from head to foot, he continued, with a raised voice—

“And that is why I like Napoleon Bonaparte better than the Count of Artois, the emigrants, the missionaries, and the miracle-mongers; at any rate, he is obliged to preserve something of our revolution, he is obliged to respect the national domain, to guarantee to every man his property, his rank, and all that he has won according to the new laws. But for that, what right would he have to be Emperor? If he did not maintain equality, what right would the nation have to wish for him? Whereas, the others, on the contrary, have attacked everything; they want to destroy everything that we have done; that’s why I like this man better, do you see?”

“Ah!” cried Mother Grethel; “this is something new.”

She laughed in a mocking way; and I would have given anything to have her safe at Quatre-Vents.

“There was a time when you spoke otherwise,” she cried; “when that other man re-established the bishops, archbishops, and cardinals; when he had himself crowned by the Pope, with the oil saved from the holy cruse; when he called back the emigrants and gave up the châteaux and forests to the great families; when he created princes, and dukes, and barons by dozens, how many times have I not heard you say that it was abominable; that he was betraying the revolution; that you would rather have had the Bourbons, for that at any rate they did not know any better; that they were like blackbirds, that always whistle the same tune because they don’t know any other, and they think it’s

the finest tune in the world; while he, on the other hand, had been made by the revolution, that his father had some dozens of goats in the mountains of Corsica, and that that ought to have shown him from his childhood that men are equal, and that courage and genius alone can raise them up! That he should have despised all those old rags, and that he should have made war only to defend the new rights and the new ideas, which are just, and which nothing can ever stop! Did you not say so, when you were talking with Father Colin in our garden at the back, for fear of being arrested if any one heard you? Was not that what you said to each other, before me?"

Father Goulden had turned quite pale. He was looking at his feet, and turning his snuffbox over and over in his hands, as was his habit when he was in deep thought; and I even saw a kind of quiet emotion in his face.

"Yes, I said so," he replied, "and I think so still. You have a good memory, Mother Grethel. It's true that for ten years Colin and I have been obliged to hide ourselves when we wanted to say things that are true, things that would happen in the end; and it was the despotism of a single man, born among us, whom we had raised up by shedding our own blood, that forced us to do so. But now things are changed; this man, whose genius nobody can deny, has seen his flatterers abandon him and betray him; he has seen that his real root is in the people, and that the grand alliances of which he was weak enough to be so proud caused his ruin. Well, he's come to rid us of these other men, and I'm glad of it."

"And have you not the courage to help yourselves?"

Do you want him?" cried Aunt Grethel. "If the processions annoyed you, and if you were what you say—the people—why did you want him?"

Then Father Goulden began to smile, and said—

"If everybody were frank enough to act according to his conscience; if many people had not taken part in these processions, some from vanity, to show their fine clothes, others from self-interest to get good places or privileges, you would be quite right, Madame Grethel, and there would be no need of Bonaparte to overturn it all. It would have been seen that seven-eighths of the nation had common sense, and perhaps Mons. the Count of Artois himself would have cried, "Hold!" But as hypocrisy and self-interest can hide and obscure everything, and make night at noonday, we unfortunately want tempests like that before we can see clear. You, and others like you, are the reason why people like me, who have never changed our opinions, are obliged to be glad when fever comes to chase away the colic."

Mons. Goulden had risen from his seat, and was walking up and down, very much disturbed, and as Aunt Grethel wanted to speak again, he took his cap and went out, saying—

"I have told you what I think; now you can talk to Joseph, who always says you are in the right."

And he went out directly. Then Mother Grethel called out—

"He's an old madman; he's always been like that! Now, for you, if you don't go to Switzerland, I warn you that you'll have to go Heaven knows where! But we'll talk of this again, my children; the chief thing is that we should be warned beforehand. We must wait to see what happens; perhaps the gendarmes will arrest

Bonaparte; but if he arrives at Paris we must run elsewhere."

She embraced us, took up her basket, and went away.

A few minutes afterwards Mons. Goulden came back, and sat down to work beside me, without saying a word on any other matter. We were quite thoughtful, and in the evening what surprised me most was that Catharine said to me—

"We will always listen to Mons. Goulden; he is in the right; he knows more of these things than my mother, and will only give us good advice."

When I heard that I thought—

"She holds with Father Goulden because they read the gazette together. This gazette always says what pleases them best; but for all that it would be a terrible thing to have to take up the knapsack, and set out again; and it would be better to be in Switzerland, or in the manufactory of Father Rulle, of Chaux de Fonds, than to have to go to Leipsic or another such place."

I did not like to contradict Catharine, but her words disquieted me greatly.

## CHAPTER XII.

FROM that moment there was confusion everywhere. The half-pay officers cried, "Vive l'Empereur!" The town-commandant would have given orders to arrest them, but the battalions held with them, and the gendarmes seemed not to hear them. There was no more work done; the inspectors, the foremen, the mayor, and the subordinate officials were thoroughly puzzled, and did not know on which foot to dance. Nobody dared to declare either for Bonaparte or for Louis XVIII., except the tilers, masons, carpenters, and labourers, who would not be ruined, and who would have been very glad to see the others in their places. These fellows, with their hatchets stuck in their leather girdles, and their bundles of materials on their shoulders, did not hesitate to cry—

"Down with the emigrants!"

They even laughed at the confusion, which increased visibly. One day the gazette said, "The usurper is at Grenoble." The next, "He is at Lyons." The next, "At Macon." The next, "At Auxerre." And so it went on.

Mons. Goulden, when he read this news in the evening, looked pleased enough.

"One can see now," he cried, "that the French are for the revolution, and that this other thing can never hold good. Everybody is crying, 'Down with the emi-

grants!' What a lesson for those who have eyes to see! These Bourbons wanted to make Vendéans of us all; they must rejoice to-day to think how well they have succeeded."

But one thing still troubled him, and that was the great battle that was announced as imminent between Ney and Napoleon.

"Although Ney has kissed Louis XVIII.'s hand," he said, "he is still an old revolutionary soldier, and I will never believe that he would fight against the will of the people. No, it's impossible. He will remember the old cooper of Sarrelouis, who would break his head with his hammer, if he were still alive, if ever he heard that Michel had betrayed the country to please the king."

That is what Mons. Goulden said, but that did not prevent people from being disquieted; when all at once came the news that Ney had followed the example of the army, the citizens and all who wanted to get rid of the expiations, and that he had gone over. Then the confidence was greater; but the fear of some extraordinary stroke of fortune still kept prudent men quiet.

The 21st of March, between five and six o'clock in the evening, Mons. Goulden and I were at work; the night was closing in. Outside a small rain pattered against the glass, and Catharine came to light the lamp. Then Theodore Roeber, who managed the telegraph, came riding at full gallop past our windows; he was mounted on a great dapple-grey horse, and the wind blew out his blouse like a balloon; he was going fast; with one hand he held his great felt hat on his head, and with the other he held a stick, and was beating his horse, which rushed along like the wind. Mons. Goulden

wiped the pane, bent forward to look out of it better, and said—

“It’s Roebber coming from the telegraph ; some great news has arrived.”

His cheeks, ordinarily rather pale, flushed up. As for me, I felt my heart beating violently. Catharine came and put down the lamp by us, and I opened the window to shut the shutters. This took me a few moments to do, because I had to unfasten the glasses of the stand to open the window and unhook the watches. Mons. Goulden was lost in thought. As I was fastening the bolt we heard the rappel beaten on both sides of the town at once near the Mittelbronn bastion and that of Bigelberg ; the echoes replied from the mountains and from the valley, and the low rumbling filled all the place just as the night was falling.

Mons. Goulden had got up from his seat.

“The affair is decided now,” said he, in a voice that turned me cold ; “either they are fighting in the environs of Paris, or the Emperor is in his old palace, as in 1809.”

Catharine had already run to bring him his cloak, for she knew that he was going out in spite of the rain. He went on speaking, with his great grey eyes wide open, and let us draw the sleeves of the coat over his arms without noticing what we were doing ; then he went out, and Catharine, touching me on the shoulder, for I was still standing there, said—

“Go, Joseph, go ; follow him.”

I went down directly. We reached the front square just as the battalion defiled from the principal street, at the corner of the mayor’s house, behind the drummers, who were running in front with their drums at their

backs. A crowd of people followed them. Under the old lime-trees, the drums began to beat; the soldiers hastily got into their ranks, and almost directly afterwards Commandant Gêmeau, who was suffering from his wounds, and had not been out of doors for two months, appeared in his uniform on the steps of his house. An orderly sapper held his horse, and lent him his shoulder to help him to mount. The people were all round, looking on. The roll-call began.

Then the commandant rode across the square, and the captains went eagerly to meet him; they spoke a few words to each other; then the commandant rode along the front of the battalion, while behind him came a simple sergeant with three stripes on his arm, carrying a flag wrapped in its oilskin case.

The crowd kept on increasing. Mons. Goulden and I got upon the edge of a wall, opposite the entrance of the guard-house. After roll-call the commandant presently drew his sword and gave orders to form square. I relate these things to you simply, because they were simple and terrible. One could see by the pallor of the commandant that he was suffering from fever, and yet it was almost night. The grey lines of the square on the open place, the commandant on horseback in the midst, with the officers around him, standing in the rain, the townspeople listening in the deep silence, the windows opening around them—all is still present to my mind, although it is nearly fifty years ago.

Nobody spoke, for every one knew that we were about to learn the fate of France.

“Carry arms! shoulder arms!” cried Captain Vidal.



After the rattle of the muskets had ceased, nothing was heard but the voice of the commandant—the ringing voice that I had heard the other side of the Rhine, at Lützen, and at Leipsic—the voice that had cried, “Close your ranks.” It stirred the very marrow in my bones.

“Soldiers,” he said, “His Majesty Louis XVIII. quitted Paris on the 20th of March, and the Emperor Napoleon made his entry into the capital the same day.”

A sort of trembling murmur passed along the ranks; but that only lasted a moment; and then the commandant went on—

“Soldiers! the flag of France is the flag of Arcola, of Rivoli, of Alexandria, of Chebreisse, of the Pyramids, of Aboukir, of Marengo, of Austerlitz, Jena, Eylau, Friedland, Somme-Sierra, Madrid, Abensberg, Eckmühl, Essling, Wagram, Smolensk, the Moskowa, Weissenfels, Lützen, Bautzen, Wurtzen, Dresden, Bischofswarda, Hanau, Brienne, Saint-Dizier, Champenbert, Chateau Thierry, Joinvilliers, Méry-sur-Seine, Montereau, and Montmirail. That is the flag we have dyed with our blood . . . . that is the flag in which we glory!”

Meanwhile the old sergeant had taken the tattered tricolour flag from its case. The commandant took it in his hand, and went on—

“Here is that flag!—you know it again—it’s the flag of the nation—it’s the flag that the Russians, Prussians, and Austrians and all those whom we spared a hundred times took from us on the day of their first victory, because they were afraid of it!”

A great number of old soldiers, when they heard

these words, turned their heads aside to hide their tears; others, pale as death, stared straight out with terrible eyes.

"For me," said the commandant, waving his sword, "I know no other. *Vive la France! Vive l'Empereur!*"

Hardly had he uttered these words, when there was such an outburst one could not hear one's own voice; from all the windows, on the square, in the streets, everywhere, cries of "*Vive la France! Vive l'Empereur!*" sounded like trumpet tones. The people and the soldiers embraced, and one would have said that everything was saved, and that we had regained everything we had lost since 1814.

It was almost night; people went off to right and left by threes, by sixes, by twenties, crying "*Vive l'Empereur!*" when in the direction of the hospital a red flash lit up the sky, and the cannon sounded; behind the arsenal another replied, and this went on from moment to moment.

Father Goulden and I walked across the square arm-in-arm, crying "*Vive la France!*" like the rest; and as at every cannon-shot in the dark night the light flashed across the square, we saw in one of the flashes Catharine and old Madeleine Schouler coming to meet us. She had put on her little cloak and hood; her pink nose was well hidden from the fog; she said, when she saw us—

"There they are, Madeleine! The Emperor has the upper hand, has he not, Mons. Goulden?"

"Yes, my child," replied Father Goulden, "it's decided."

Then Catharine took my arm, and I don't know

why, but I embraced her two or three times as we went home. Perhaps I felt a presentiment that I should have to go away soon, and should not embrace her long. Father Goulden, walking before us with Madeleine, said—

“This evening I shall drink a good glass of wine. Come up. Madeleine, I invite you.”

But she would not; she said good-bye to us at the door.

All that I can say is, that the joy of the people was just as great as at the arrival of Louis XVIII., and perhaps greater.

Once in our room, and relieved of his great cloak, Mons. Goulden sat down at the table, for supper was waiting for him. Catharine ran to the cellar to look for a bottle of good wine. We drank and laughed, while the cannon made our windows shake. Sometimes people lose their heads, even those who love peace most; these cannon-shots rejoiced us, and we seemed, in a manner, to be taking up our old habits again.

Mons. Goulden said—

“Commandant Gêmeau has spoken well; but he might have gone on till to-morrow, if he had begun with Valmy, Hundschott, Wattignies, Fleurus, Neu-vied, Ukerath, Froeschwiller, Geisberg, and gone on down to Zurich and Hohenlinden. Those were great victories too, and even the finest of all, because they saved liberty. He only mentioned the last ones, and that was enough for the time. Let those other people come—let them dare to stir themselves! The nation desires peace; but if the allies begin war, woe to them! Now people will speak again of liberty, equality, fraternity. In that way all France will rise, I assure you

it will—all will rise in a body. National guards will be appointed; old fellows like me and married men will defend the towns; the young will march, but not beyond the frontier. The Emperor, taught by experience, will arm the workmen, the peasants, and the citizens; if the foreigners come, if there were a million of them, not one will go beyond our frontiers. The time for soldiers has passed by; regular armies are good for conquest, but a people that wants to defend itself does not fear the best soldiers in the world. We showed that to the Prussians, the Austrians, the English, and the Russians, from 1792 to 1800; since that, the Spaniards have shown it to us; and even before, the Americans had shown it to the English. The Emperor will talk to us of liberty, you may be sure of it. If he chooses to issue proclamations in Germany, many Germans will side with us; they have been promised liberties, to make them march in mass against France, and now the sovereigns assembled at Vienna laugh at the idea of keeping their promise; they're dividing the people among themselves like flocks and herds. The sensible people will hold together, and in this way peace will be established perforce. It's only the kings who have an interest in war; nations don't want to conquer each other, so long as they can benefit one another by freedom of commerce, and that's the chief thing."

In his excitement he saw everything in a pleasant light. For my own part, I thought what he said was so natural, that I felt sure the Emperor would act in the way he suggested. Catharine thought so too. We all blessed the Lord for what had happened, and towards eleven o'clock, after we had talked, and laughed, and

shouted ourselves weary, we went to bed with the best of hopes. Then all the town was illuminated, and we had put little lamps outside our windows, too. Every moment crackers were heard going off; the children were crying, "Vive l'Empereur!" and the soldiers came out of the wine-shops singing, "Down with the emigrants!"

That went on till very late, and it was not till one o'clock we at last got to sleep,

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE general satisfaction continued for five or six days. The old mayors were re-elected, the old deputies and gamekeepers—all those people, in fact, who had been thrust aside some months before. The whole town, ladies and all, wore little tricoloured cockades, which the dressmakers made up in haste, out of red, blue, and white ribbons. Those who lately had been howling against the “Corsican ogre,” had no other name now for Louis XVIII. but “King Panado.” On the 25th of March the *Te Deum* was sung; all the garrison and the authorities were present in great state.

After the *Te Deum*, the authorities gave a magnificent dinner to the staff-officers of the town; the weather had become settled, the windows of the City of Metz were open, and clusters of lamps hung from the ceiling. Catharine and I went out in the evening to enjoy this spectacle. All round the long tables uniforms and black coats were seen fraternising together; and until midnight, sometimes the mayor, sometimes one of his deputies, or Mons. Brancion, the new town commandant, was getting up to drink the health of the Emperor, or of his ministers, or to drink to the prosperity of France, the maintenance of peace, to victory, &c.

The glasses clinked merrily. Without, the children were letting off crackers; a “*mat de cockagne*”<sup>\*</sup> had

\* A pole, with prizes on it, to be won by climbing.

been set up in front of the church; some wooden horses and organ-men had arrived from Saverne; there was a holiday at the college; and in Klein's courtyard at the Ox was to be seen the spectacle of a fight between some dogs and two asses; in fact, they were doing as they have done in 1830, in 1848, and since. It's always the same; people invent nothing new to glorify those who go up, and to jeer at those who go down.

But it seems that the Emperor had no time to lose in rejoicings. The *Gazette* said, indeed, that his majesty wished for peace, that he demanded nothing, that he had come to an agreement with his father-in-law, the Emperor Francis, that Marie Louise and the King of Rome were coming back, that they were expected. Yes, but meanwhile an order came to put the place in a state of defence. Two years before, Phalsbourg had been a hundred leagues from the frontier; the ramparts were crumbling to ruin, the ditches were becoming choked up, there was no artillery in the arsenal but some old pieces of Louis XIV's time, rampart guns that were let off with slow matches, and some cannon, so heavy on their clumsy carriages, that whole teams of horses were required to drag them along. The real arsenals were at Dresden, Hamburg, and Erfurt; but now, without having moved, we were ten leagues from Rhenish Bavaria, and upon us the first discharge of shells and balls would fall. So day by day orders came to heighten the ramparts, clear out the ditches, and put the cannon in order.

At the beginning of April a great workshop was established in the arsenal for the repairing of weapons. Men of the engineer corps and artillerymen came from Metz to make the levellings inside the bastions and the

embrasures around them. There was a greater stir than even in 1805 and 1813, and I thought more than once that wide frontiers at a distance had their advantages after all, since the people who live in the interior are spared many blows, and can live in peace a long time, while the others are already being bombarded.

We were suffering very great anxiety; for naturally, when new palisades are fixed on the glacis, and fascines are put to the half-moons, and cannon are planted in every angle of a strong town, there will be men wanted to guard and to work all this. More than once, when we heard the decrees read in the evening journal, Catharine and I listened with compressed lips. I felt already that instead of staying here quietly, cleaning and mending clocks, I should perhaps have to begin practising the double again; and that made me feel very uncomfortable. Melancholy took possession of me more and more; often Mons. Goulden, when he saw me sitting quite pensive, would cry out in a cheerful tone—

“Come, Joseph, courage! All will end well.”

He wanted to raise my spirits; but I felt thus: “Yes, yes—you tell me these things to encourage me; but if a man be not blind, he can see what a turn things are taking.”

Events marched on so quickly, that decrees followed decrees like hail, all garnished with fine words to make them read well. We heard that the regiments were again to be called by their old numbers, rendered illustrious in so many glorious campaigns. Without being very cunning, we could easily understand that the old numbers which had no regiments would have them again. And if that were not enough, we heard that the



3rd, 4th, and 5th battalions of infantry, the 4th and 5th squadrons of cavalry, thirty battalions of the artillery train, twenty regiments of the Young Guard, ten battalions for the commissariat department, and twenty regiments of marine were all to be embodied, as they said, to give employment to the half-pay officers of all arms, naval and military; but it was all very well to say this; when regiments are embodied, the next thing is to fill the ranks; and when the numbers are full, the next thing to do is to march the men away.

Ah, when I saw that, my confidence was gone. And they kept on repeating, "Peace, peace!—we accept the treaty of Paris—the kings and emperors assembled at Vienna will come to terms with us—Marie Louise and the King of Rome are on their way back." The more these things were repeated, the more my distrust increased. It was of no use for Mons. Goulden to tell me—

"He has taken Carnot—Carnot is a good patriot—Carnot will prevent him from making war—or, if we are obliged to go to war, he will show him that we must await the enemy at home—we must rouse up the whole nation, and declare the country in danger—and so on."

It was of no use his saying such things as these to me: I always repeated to myself—"All these measures are not taken for nothing; the regiments will be raised to their full strength, that's certain."

It soon became known, too, that ten thousand picked men were to be received into the Guards, and that the light artillery was reorganised. But light artillery is meant to march with an army, that's very clear. To remain behind ramparts, and defend oneself at home, light artillery is not required. This idea came into my head directly; and even in the evenings I could not

help saying so to Catharine. I had always been careful to conceal my forebodings from her ; but this time the impulse was too strong for me. She made no reply, which proved to me that she was a sensible woman, and thought as I did.

All these things took away a good deal of my enthusiasm for the Emperor. Sometimes when I was at work I said to myself—

“After all, I would rather look out of my window at processions than go and fight against people whom I don’t know. At any rate, the sight would not cost me an arm or a leg ; and if it displeased me very much, I could go and take a walk to Quatre-Vents.”

My disquietude was increased by the fact that since her dispute with Mons. Goulden, Aunt Grethel did not come to see us any more. She was an obstinate woman ; she would not listen to reason, and could bear a grudge against people for years and years. Still she was our mother, and it was our duty to give way to her ; she only wished for our happiness. But how should we manage so as to agree both with her and Mons. Goulden ? That’s what troubled us ; for if we owed affection to Aunt Grethel, we also owed the greatest respect to the worthy man who looked upon us as his own children, and showered benefits on us every day.

These thoughts made us very sad ; and I had made up my mind to tell Mons. Goulden that Catharine and I were Jacobins like himself, but that without disclaiming the ideas of the Jacobins or abandoning them, we ought to honour our mother, and go to her to ask about her health. I did not know how he would receive our declaration ; but one morning, on a Sunday, when we came down at about eight o’clock, we found this

excellent man, who had just dressed himself, waiting for us; he seemed in a cheerful mood, and said—

“My children, for almost a month Aunt Grethel has not been here to see us; she is obstinate. Well, I’m going to show that I’m wiser than she, and I will give way to her. Between people like ourselves there ought no cloud to come. After breakfast we will go to Quatre-Vents, and tell her she’s a stubborn person, and that we love her in spite of her faults. You shall see how ashamed she will be!”

He laughed, and we felt quite moved.

“Ah, Mons. Goulden, how good you are!” cried Catharine; “any one must have a very bad heart not to love you.”

“Why?” he replied, “is not what I am doing quite natural? Ought one to remain divided for the sake of a few words? Heaven be thanked, age teaches us that the most reasonable man is he who makes the first advances; and you must know that this is even written in the *Rights of Man*, to maintain concord among honest folks.”

When he had cited the *Rights of Man*, there was nothing more to be said on the subject. It may be imagined how glad we were. Catharine, in her joy, could hardly wait until breakfast was over; she tripped about right and left, to bring his walking-stick, his square-toed shoes, and the box in which his best wig was fixed on its stand. She helped Mons. Goulden to get into the sleeves of the nut-brown coat; he looked at her with a smile, and at last embraced her.

“Ah, I knew,” he said, “that my doing this would make you happy. So let us not lose a minute, but start at once.”

Accordingly we went out together. The weather was very fine. Mons. Goulden gave his arm to Catharine, solemnly, as he always did in the town, and I walked behind them with a glad heart. I had before my eyes the beings I loved best in the world, and I was thinking of what Mother Grethel would say. We passed the gates, and then the glacis; and twenty minutes afterwards, without having hurried too much, we arrived at Aunt Grethel's door.

It might then be about ten o'clock. As I had gone on a little way in advance, at the inn of La Roulette, I first went into the avenue of elms which skirted the house, and looked through the window, to see what aunt was about. She was sitting just opposite me, near the smoking stove; she had on her petticoat with the blue stripes and the great pockets in front, her coarse cloth jacket, and wooden shoes. She was knitting, with her eyes cast down, and looked melancholy; her long thin arms projected from her sleeves to the elbow, and her grey hair was twisted at the back of her head, without a cap. When I saw her sitting thus all alone, I said to myself—"Poor Aunt Grethel, she's certainly thinking of us—she continues obstinate in her sorrow—it's a dreary life to be alone, and not to see one's children." That made my heart ache; but at that moment the door towards the road opened, and Father Goulden entered gleefully with Catharine, crying—

"Ah, you don't come to see us any more, Mother Grethel, so it's requisite that I should bring your children to you, and that I should come to embrace you myself! You've got to give us a good dinner, do you hear? And let that be a lesson for you."

He seemed grave, even in his joy. Aunt, when she

saw them, hastened to embrace Catharine; then she threw herself into Mons. Goulden's arms, and hung round his neck.

"Ah, Mons. Goulden," she cried, "how rejoiced I am to see you! You are a good man—you are a thousand times better than I."

Seeing that things were taking a good turn, I ran to the door, and found them both with tears in their eyes. Then Father Goulden said—

"We won't talk politics any more!"

"Ah, one may be a Jacobin or anything one likes; the chief thing is to have a good heart."

Then she came to embrace me too, and said—

"My poor Joseph, I've been thinking of you from morning till night. Now everything's well, and I am content!"

Then she ran off into the kitchen, and began rattling all her pots and pans to regale us; while Mons. Goulden deposited his stick in the corner, placed his great hat upon it, and sat down by the stove with the air of a well-pleased man.

"What fine weather!" he exclaimed. "Everything is growing green, everything is flourishing—how glad I should be to live in the fields, to see the hedges through my windows; and apple-trees and plum-trees, all white and pink!"

He was as merry as a lark; and so we should all have been, but for the ideas of war which kept moving in our heads.

"Leave that to me, mother," said Catharine. "Sit down quietly by Mons. Goulden. I will prepare the dinner, like in the old times."

"But you won't know where to look for anything now," said my aunt. "I've altered everything."

"Sit down, I beg of you," answered Catharine. "Make yourself easy ; I shall find the butter, and eggs, and flour, and all that I want."

"Well, well, I must obey you," said my aunt, as she went down into the cellar.

Catharine hung her pretty shawl over the back of my chair ; she put wood into the fire, and melted some butter, and looked into the saucepans to see that all was going on well. Presently aunt came up from the cellar, with a bottle of white wine.

"You must take some refreshment before dinner," she said ; "and while Catharine is attending to the kitchen, I shall put on my gown, and give myself a touch of the comb, of which I stand in need, Heaven knows. For you, you must go out—go to the orchard—here, Joseph, take these glasses and the bottle—go and sit down in the apiary—it's fine weather—in an hour all will be ready here. I will go and drink a health with you."

So Father Goulden and I went out, passing through the high grass and the yellow marigolds, which came up to our knees. It was very warm, and there was a humming all round. We sat down in the shadow of the apiary, looking at the magnificent sun that shone between the buzzing hives. Mons. Goulden hung up his wig behind him, to be more at his ease ; I uncorked the bottle, and we drank the good little white wine.

"Come, everything is going well," said he. "If men commit follies, Providence still watches over the world. Look at those corn crops, Joseph, how they're growing : what a harvest there will be three or four months hence ! And these turnips, and colzas, and shrubs, and bees, how all seem to work, and to live, and to grow !

What a pity that men do not follow such an example—that some must work to maintain others in idleness, and that there must always be do-nothings of all kinds, who treat us as Jacobins because we want to have order, justice, and peace !”

What he loved most in the world was the sight of work: not of ours, which is nothing, but the work of the smallest insects that **run on** the earth among the grass, as if in endless forests—that build themselves dwellings, and congregate together, and hatch their eggs, and store them up in magazines, and warm them by exposing them to the sun, and take them in at night and defend them against enemies—that great life where everything sings, where everything is in its place, from the lark that fills the sky with its joyous music to the ant which goes and comes, runs to and fro, reaps, saws, drags burdens, and is a Jack-of-all-trades. Yes, that’s what Mons. Goulden admired; but he never spoke of it but in the fields, when he saw this grand spectacle; and naturally then he spoke of God, whom he called the Supreme Being, like the old calendar-maker of the Republic, and He was the essence of reason, wisdom, goodness, love, justice, order, and life. The old idea of the calendar-maker came back to him too: it was magnificent to hear him talk of pluviose, the season of rain; of nivose, the season of snow; of ventose, the season of winds; and then of floréal, prairial, and fructidor. He said that the ideas of men in those times had reference to the Providence of God, whereas July, September, and October meant nothing, and had been invented for no purpose but to obscure and confuse everything. Once on this chapter there was no stopping him, and he got you to see everything

in his way. Unfortunately, I have not the learning that this excellent man possessed, otherwise I should be very glad to repeat his ideas to you.

We were just discussing this subject when Mother Grethel appeared coming from the house towards the apiary, well washed and combed, and in her Sunday clothes; and Mons. Gouldon stopped immediately for the sake of keeping the peace.

"Well, here I am," said my aunt; "it's all ready now."

"Come, sit you down," cried Mons. Goulden; and he made room for her on the bench beside him.

"Ah, do you know what time it is?" cried my aunt "Time doesn't hang heavy on your hands. Listen!"

We listened, and heard the town clock slowly striking twelve.

"What! twelve o'clock already!" exclaimed Mons. Goulden. "I should have sworn we hadn't been sitting here ten minutes."

"Well, it's twelve o'clock," said my aunt, "and dinner's waiting for you."

"Very good," said Mons. Goulden, offering her his arm. "Come, Gossip, let us go in; since you have told me the time, my appetite has come."

They went down the avenue arm-in-arm; I followed in very good spirits; and when we came to the door a very agreeable spectacle offered itself to our eyes. The great soup-tureen, with its red painted flowers, was steaming on the table; a stuffed breast of veal filled the room with its fragrant odour, and some spiced cakes were piled up in a great dish on the old oak sideboard; while two bottles, with glasses sparkling like crystal, glittered on the white cloth by the plates; and when one



saw this one could not help thinking how many good gifts Providence showers upon men.

Catharine, with her pretty red cheeks and white teeth, laughed at our satisfaction, and it may be said that throughout dinner our disquietude for the future was banished from our minds. We only thought of making ourselves comfortable, and laughed, and thought that everything was satisfactory in the world.

It was not till later in the day, when we were taking coffee, that a kind of sadness came upon us; without knowing why, each of us became thoughtful. We would not talk of politics, though, until at last Aunt Grethel herself asked what the news was. Mons. Goulden then said that the Emperor wished for peace, that he was only putting himself in a state of defence--a necessary thing, to show our enemies we were not afraid of them. He said that in any case, in spite of their evil intentions, the allies would not dare, would not invade us, for that Father-in-law Francis, though he had not much heart, had enough not to wish to overthrow his son-in-law with his daughter and his grandson twice; that it would be against nature; and that, moreover, the nation would rise in a body, that the country would be declared in danger, and that it would not be merely a war of soldiers, but a war of all Frenchmen against those who wanted to oppress them. That this would bring the allied sovereigns to reason, and so on.

He said many other things which I cannot remember now. Aunt Grethel listened without making any reply. At last she rose, and took from a cupboard a grey paper which she handed to Mons. Goulden, saying to him--

“Just read this; there are similar papers going the

round of all the country ; this one comes from Mons. the Curé Dièmer. You can see by this if peace is secure."

Mons. Goulden had not his spectacles, therefore I read the paper for him. I have put all these old writings away years ago ; they have become yellow, and no one thinks of them now, or speaks of them ; and yet it's always good to read them now and then. Who can tell what will happen ? The old kings and emperors, who were against us, have died after doing us all the harm in their power ; but their sons and grandsons are alive, and don't look too favourably upon us ; what they have asserted in times past they may assert again, and those who helped the old kings may help the new ones. Well, this is what the paper declared—

"The allied powers, who have signed the treaty of Paris, and are now assembled at the congress of Vienna, having been informed of the escape of Napoleon Bonaparte, and of his appearance, in arms, in France, owe to their dignity, and to the interest of social order, a solemn declaration of the sentiments by which they are actuated on this occasion.

"By thus breaking the convention which had established him in the Island of Elba, Bonaparte has destroyed the only legal title on which his existence depended. By reappearing in France with projects of disturbance and confusion, he has deprived himself by his own act of the protection of the laws, and has manifested in the face of the universe that there can be no peace or treaty with him."

Thus the allies went on, through two long pages ; and these people, who could have nothing in common

with us, whom our affairs did not concern, and who gave themselves the title of defenders of the peace, concluded with the declaration that they were going to unite in a body to maintain the treaty of Paris, and to restore Louis XVIII.

When I had done reading, my aunt looked at Mons. Goulden, and said to him—

“What do you think of that?”

“I think,” he replied, “that these men are laughing at the people, and that they exterminate the human race without shame and without pity, to maintain fifteen or twenty families in abundance. I think those people look upon themselves as gods, or upon us as beasts.”

“Certainly,” said Aunt Grethel, “I don’t deny it; but that won’t prevent Joseph from having to go.”

I turned quite pale when I considered that aunt was right.

“Yes,” answered Mons. Goulden, “I have known it for some days; and this is what I have done. You have no doubt heard, Mother Grethel, that they’re establishing great workshops for repairing arms. There’s one of them in the arsenal at Phalsbourg, but they’re in want of good workmen. Naturally, good workmen render just as good service to the state, by repairing arms, as those who go out and fight; they have more trouble, but, at any rate, they don’t risk their lives, and they stay at home. Well, then, I went directly to the commandant of artillery, Mons. de Montravel, and presented a request that Joseph should be received as a workman. To repair a gunlock is easy work for a good clockmaker; Mons. de Montravel accepted my proposal at once. And here is his order,” said Mons. Goulden, showing us a paper he drew from his pocket.

Then I felt like a man new born, and I called out—

“Oh, Mons. Goulden, you are more than a father to us; you have saved my life.”

And Catharine, who had been suffocating with disquietude for a long time past, went out directly; while Aunt Grethel, who had got up, embraced Mons. Goulden a second time, saying—

“Yes, you are the best of men—a sensible man—a very clever man indeed. Ah, if all the Jacobins were like you, women would want to marry none but Jacobins.”

“But what I have done is a very simple thing,” said he.

“No, no, it’s not a simple thing; it’s your good heart that puts these good ideas into your head.”

As for me, in my astonishment and my joy, I could not find words; and while my aunt was speaking, I went out into the backyard, to take a turn in the open air. Catharine was there in the corner of the arbour; she was weeping hot tears.

“Ah, now,” she said, “I breathe again; I’ve new life now.”

I embraced her with indescribable tenderness. I saw what she must have suffered for a month past; but she was a courageous woman, who hid her uneasiness from me; she knew that I had enough anxiety of my own. We stood there more than ten minutes to dry our tears; then, when we had gone in again, Mons. Goulden said—

“Well, Joseph, it’s for to-morrow; you must start early; you will not want for work.”

What happiness to think that I should not have to go away! Ah, I had other reasons for wishing to stay.

Jatharine and I had hopes of our own. Ah, those who have never experienced this cannot know what men may suffer, or what a weight a piece of good news takes off your heart.

We stopped at Quatre-Vents about an hour more. Then just as people were coming back from vespers, and night was falling, we set out on our way back to the town. Aunt Grethel accompanied us as far as the posting-house, and by seven o'clock we were mounting our own staircase.

Thus it was that peace was concluded between Aunt Grethel and Mons. Goulden. After that she came to see us as often as ever. I used to go every day to the arsenal, and work at repairing gunlocks. When twelve o'clock rang, I used to come home to dinner. At one o'clock I went back to work, and stayed till seven. I was at once an artisan and a soldier; I was excused from parade, but overwhelmed with work. We hoped that I should remain in this position to the end of the war, if by any unhappy chance it should break out, for nothing was known for certain.

## CHAPTER XIV.

WE had gained a little confidence since I had been working at the arsenal, but still we were somewhat disquieted; for hundreds of weekly labourers, old soldiers, re-enlisted for a campaign, and conscripts were continually passing, with their bags behind them, and dressed in their village clothes. They all shouted "Vive l'Empereur!" and looked furious. In the great hall of the mayor's house, some received a capote, others a shako, others epaulettes, gaiters, or shoes, at the expense of the department. Then they went away to join the army, and I wished them a happy journey.

All the tailors in the town were making uniforms on speculation; the gendarmes gave up their horses to mount the cavalry, and his worship the mayor, Baron Parmentier, excited the young lads of sixteen and seventeen to take service with the partisans of Colonel Brice, who were to defend the passes of the Zorne, the Zinselle, and the Sarre. The baron was himself going to the Champ de Mai, and that doubled his enthusiasm. "Come—courage!" he would cry to them; and then he talked of the Greeks and the Romans, and how they used to fight for their country.

I thought as I listened to him —

"If you think that so fine, why don't you go and join, yourself?"

It may be imagined with what zeal I worked at the

arsenal ; nothing was a trouble to me, and I could have gone on day and night repairing guns, fitting bayonets, and tightening screws. When Commandant de Montravel came to see what we were doing, he commended me.

"That will do," he said ; "that's well ; I'm pleased with you, Bertha."

I heard these words with much satisfaction, and did not fail to repeat them to Catharine, to cheer her up ; we were almost certain that Mons. de Montravel would keep me at Phalsbourg.

The *Gazettes* now talked about nothing but the new constitution, which they called the additional act, and of the Champ de Mai. Mons. Goulden had always something to object, sometimes on one point, sometimes on another ; but I did not mix myself up with these affairs ; I even felt sorry for having cried out against the processions and expiations ; for I had had enough of politics.

This went on until the 23rd of May. That day, towards ten o'clock in the morning, I was in the great hall of the arsenal, busy packing cases of guns. Both sides of the great folding doors were open ; the soldiers of the military train, with their waggons, were waiting in front of the piles of cannon-balls to load their cases. I was nailing down the last, when Robert, the engineer guard, touched me on the shoulder, and said to me quietly—

"Bertha, Commandant de Montravel wishes to see you ; he is in the pavilion."

What could the commandant have to say to me ? I did not know, and I felt frightened directly. However, I went off directly across the great courtyard, mounted the staircase, and knocked gently at the door.

"Come in!" cried the commandant.

I opened the door trembling, cap in hand. Commandant de Montravel was a tall, thin, dark man, with his head slightly bowed. He was walking up and down, amid his books and maps, and weapons that hung from the walls.

"Ah, it's you, Bertha," he said, when he perceived me; "I've disagreeable news for you. The third battalion, to which you belong, is to march to Metz."

When I heard this terrible news I felt my heart stand still, and I could not answer a word.

The commandant looked at me.

"Don't distress yourself," he said, after a moment's silence; "you married some months ago, and, moreover, you're a good workman, and that deserves to be taken into consideration. Give this letter to Colonel Desmichels, at the arsenal of Metz; he's a friend of mine, and will find you employment in his workshops, you may be sure."

I took the letter he held out to me, thanked him, and went away full of anxious forebodings.

At our house, Zebedee, Mons. Goulden, and Catharine were talking together in the workshop; dismay was painted on their faces, for they knew all already.

"The third battalion is to march," I said to them, as I came in; "but that's no matter—for his Honour the commandant has just given me this letter for the chief of the arsenal at Metz. Don't be disquieted—I shall not have to serve the campaign."

I felt almost choking. Mons. Goulden took the letter, and said—

"It is open, and has been left so that we may read it."

So he read the letter, in which Mons. de Montravel



recommended me to his friend, saying that I was married, and a good workman, full of zeal, necessary to my family, and that I had done really good service at the arsenal. Nothing better could have been written. Zebedee called out—

“Now your business is sure!”

“Yes,” said Mons. Goulden, “you’re retained in the arsenal of Metz.”

And Catharine became quite pale, and embraced me, saying—

“What happiness, Joseph!”

All pretended to believe that I should remain at Metz, and I also tried to hide my terror from them. But it was choking me, and I could hardly keep from sobbing; fortunately, the idea came into my head that I would go and tell the news to Aunt Grethel.

“Listen,” I said to them. “Though it’s not for long, and I am to stay at Metz, I must go and announce this good news to Aunt Grethel. This evening, between five and six o’clock, I shall be back. Catharine will have time to pack my bag, and we will sup together.”

“Yes, go, Joseph,” said Mons. Goulden.

Catharine said nothing, for she had much ado to keep from bursting into tears. I went off like one distraught. Zebedee, who was going back to barracks, informed me that the officer who superintended the clothing was at the mayor’s, and that I must be there towards five o’clock. I listened to his words like one in a dream, and rushed away quite out of the town. On the glacis, I set off running without looking where, in the covered way; I passed the fountain of Trois-Châteaux, and Upper Baraques, beside the wood, to go to Quatre-Vents. I cannot describe the thoughts that

passed through my brain; I was scared, and would have liked to run as far as Switzerland. But the worst was when I approached Quatre-Vents by the path of Dann. It might be three o'clock; Mother Grethel, who was fastening up poles for her beans, behind in the garden, had seen me from afar. She had said to herself—

“Why, it's Joseph. What's he doing among the cornfields?”

For me, when once I was in the sandy hollow way that the sun heated like a furnace, I came up slowly, with my head hanging down, thinking to myself—“I shall never dare to go in,” when all at once aunt called out to me from behind the hedge—

“Is it you, Joseph?”

Then I trembled.

“Yes, it is I,” I answered.

Then she came out into her little avenue, and seeing me standing there quite pale, she said—

“I know why you have come, my child. You have to go away; is it not so?”

“Oh,” I replied, “I am retained for the arsenal at Metz—the others have to go; but I shall stay at Metz—it's very fortunate!”

She said nothing in reply. We went into the kitchen, which felt very cool compared with the great heat outside. She sat down, and I read her the commandant's letter. She listened, and then she said—

“Yes, it's very fortunate.”

And then we sat looking at each other without speaking.

Then she took my head between her hands, and em-

braced me for a long time; and then I saw that she was shedding hot tears without heaving a sigh.

"You weep," I said to her. "But I am to stay at Metz."

She said nothing in reply, but presently she went down into the cellar to bring some wine. She made me drink a glass, and then said to me—

"What does Catharine say?"

"She is glad to hear that I am to remain at Metz," I answered, "and Mons. Goulden too."

"That's well," she answered. "Are they getting ready what you want to take?"

"Yes, Aunt Grethel, and I must be at the town-hall by five o'clock to receive my uniform."

"Well, then," she said, "embrace me. I shall not go there. I will not see the battalion march away. I shall stop. I will live a long time yet. Catharine will want me to live."

She was beginning to speak loud and angrily; but suddenly she checked herself, and said to me—

"At what time do you go?"

"To-morrow, at seven o'clock, Mamma Grethel."

"Well, then, I will come at eight o'clock. You will be already far away; but you will know that your wife's mother is there—that she will take care of her daughter—that she loves you, and has none but you in the world."

And as she spoke thus, my aunt, courageous though she was, burst out sobbing. She went with me as far as the road, and I made my way back, feeling as if I had not a drop of blood in my veins. I got to the council-house at the stroke of five. I went upstairs, and saw the hall again where I had had bad luck—the

ill-starred hall where everybody drew bad numbers. I received a great-coat, a coat, a pair of trousers, gaiters, and boots. Zebedee, who was waiting for me, told a soldier to carry everything to my quarters.

"You must come early, and put that on," said he; "your knapsack and gun have been in the rack since this morning."

"Come with me," said I.

"No," he answered; "it breaks my heart to see Catharine; besides, I must stay with my father. Who knows if I shall find the poor old man here a year hence? I have promised to sup with you, but I shall not come."

So I had to go in alone. My bag was ready—my old bag—the only thing I had brought back from Hanau—the bag on which my head had rested in the ammunition-waggon. Mons. Goulden was at work; he turned round towards me, but said nothing.

"Where is Catharine?" I asked.

"She is upstairs."

I knew that she must be weeping. I should have liked to go up to her, but my legs and my courage failed me. I told Mons. Goulden what Aunt Grethel had said at Quatre-Vents; and then we waited, sitting thoughtfully opposite each other, neither daring to look in the other's face. Night came on, and when it was quite dark, Catharine came down. She laid the table in the dark, and then I took her hand, and made her sit down on my knee; and so we remained for another half-hour.

"Is not Zebedee coming?" inquired Mons. Goulden.

"No; the service keeps him away."

"Well, then, let us sup," said he.

But no one was hungry. Catharine cleared the table

at about nine o'clock, and we went to bed. It was the most terrible night I ever passed in my life. Catharine was like one dead ; I called her, and she did not answer. At midnight I went and roused Mons. Goulden. He dressed himself and came up. We made her drink some water and sugar, and she revived and got up. I cannot tell you everything that happened. I only know that she clung to my knees, and begged me not to forsake her, as if I were going of my own will ; but she was distraught. Mons. Goulden was for bringing a doctor, but I prevented him. She recovered herself entirely towards daylight, had a long fit of weeping, and at last fell asleep in my arms. Then I did not dare even to embrace her ; but Mons. Goulden and I went gently out. At such times one feels the miseries of life, and thinks, "O God, why have I been born into this world? Why have I been born into this world? Why have I not been allowed to slumber on through all eternity? What had I done, before I was born, that I deserve to see those I love suffer, without any fault of mine?" But it is not God who does things like these : it is man who wrings the heart of his fellow-man !

At last Mons. Goulden and I went down, and he said to me—

"She is asleep—she knows nothing about it—it is better so—you shall go away before she awakes."

I thanked Heaven for giving her that sleep. We sat thoughtful, listening for every sound, till at last the drums began to beat. Then Mons. Goulden looked gravely at me, and we got up. He took the bag and strapped it on my shoulders in silence.

"Joseph," he said, "go and see the commandant of the arsenal at Metz, but don't reckon on anything. The

danger is so pressing that France requires all her children to defend her. And now we are not going to take other people's property, but to defend our own country. Remember that it is for yourself, your wife, and all that is dearest to you in the world, that you're fighting now. I wish I were twenty years younger, that I might go with you and set an example."

Then we went down, without making any noise ; we embraced each other, and I went off to the barracks. Zebedee himself took me to the dormitory, where I put on my uniform. All that I remember, after the years that have passed since, is that Zebedee's father, who was there, made my clothes up into a bundle, saying that he was going to our house after our departure ; and that then the battalion defiled through the little street of Lanche, under the French gate.

Some children followed us. The sentries on duty at the gate saluted as we passed. And thus we set out on our way to Waterloo.

## CHAPTER XV.

AT Sarrebourg we received billeting orders. I was quartered upon the old printer Jarcisse, who knew Mons. Goulden and Aunt Grethel. He made me dine at his table with my new bedfellow, Jean Buche, son of a woodcutter of Harberg, who had never lived on anything better than potatoes till he became a conscript, and who swallowed the meat that was served up to us, bones and all. For my part, I was so melancholy, that to hear him crunch the bones made me quite nervous.

Father Jarcisse tried to console me, but all he said only made me feel more mournful than ever.

We spent the rest of the day and the following night at Sarrebourg. Next day we marched as far as to the village of Mezieres, the day after that to Vic, and the next day to Solgne; at last, on the fifth day, we drew near to Metz.

There's nothing much to tell you about our march. Soldiers marching along from stage to stage, white with dust, knapsack on shoulders, carrying their guns as they like best, talk enough, and go through the villages, looking at the girls, the waggons and homesteads, and hills and valleys, taking no thought about anything. And when one feels sad, and has left at home a wife, and old friends, and people who love one, and whom one will perhaps never see again, everything

passes before one's eyes like a shadow, and is forgotten, a hundred paces off.

But the sight of Metz, with its lofty cathedral, its old houses and dark ramparts, aroused me. Two hours before we arrived there, we seemed to be already in the covered ways. It was very hot, and we stepped out briskly, to be the sooner in the shade. Then I thought of Colonel Desmichels, and I had a hope, a very slight one, and said to myself, "Ah, if I should be so lucky!" I felt for my letter. Zebedee did not talk to me, but he turned and looked at me every now and then. It was no longer quite like in the old times. He was a sergeant now, and I was only a private soldier. What would you have? We were fond of each other still; but it made a difference, for all that.

Jean Buche marched along by my side, with his shoulders rounded, and his toes turned in like a wolf's paw. The only thing that we said was to observe every now and then that shoes cramp one's feet during a march, and ought only to be worn on parade. For two months the sergeant had been trying in vain to turn out his toes and straighten his shoulders; but he was a terrible fellow for marching, in his own way, and never got tired.

At last, about five o'clock in the afternoon, we came to the outworks. A party came forward to reconnoitre us, and the captain of the guard called out—

"Come when you like!"

Then the drums began to beat, and we entered that famous town, the oldest place I have ever seen. At Metz the Seille and the Moselle meet; and there one sees houses of four or five stories high, the bulging walls crossed and recrossed with beams, as at Saverne



and Bruxviller; round windows and square ones, small windows and big ones, all on the same line, with shutters and without shutters, glazed and unglazed. The buildings look as old as the mountains and rivers; and the roofs at the top project five or six feet, and throw long shadows over the black waters, where old shoes, and rags, and dead dogs go floating past.

When one looks up into the air, in one of these by-places, one is almost sure to see, peering through a skylight, the face of an old Jew, with his grey beard and his hooked nose, or a child stretching out, in danger of tumbling down, or something of that kind; for to say the truth, Metz is a town of Jews and soldiers. Not that there's any lack of poor people; for it's worse than at Mayence, or Strasbourg, or even Frankfort. Unless, indeed, all this have changed since those times; people love their ease now-a-days, and embellish their towns more and more.

So we walked along, past these sights, and, melancholy as I felt, I could not help glancing down these lanes. The town was swarming at that time with National Guards; they were coming from Longwy, Sarrelouis, and other places; for the soldiers were marching out, and the National Guards came in to take their places.

We came to an open square, littered with mattresses, palliasses, and other articles of bedding that the citizens furnished to the troops. We were ordered to stand at ease in front of a barrack building, whose windows were open all the way up. We waited, thinking we should be quartered in these barracks; but after twenty minutes' delay, the distribution of billets began. Every man received twenty-five sous and a lodging-ticket.

Then we were told to break off, and every man went his way. Jean Buche, who had never seen any town but Phalsbourg, stuck close to me.

Our billet bore the name of Elias Meyer, butcher, dwelling in the Rue de St. Valery. When we arrived at the house, the butcher, who was cutting up meat at an arched window, with a grating in front of it, lost his temper, and received us very rudely. He was a great red-haired Jew, with a round face, and he wore silver rings on his fingers and in his ears; his thin yellow wife came downstairs, crying out that they had lodged soldiers the night before, and the night before that—that the secretary at the mayor's office had a grudge against them, and sent them soldiers every day, while their neighbours had none—and more to the same purpose. However, they let us come in. Their daughter came to look at us. Behind her stood a fat servant-girl with frizzled hair, looking very dirty. I fancy I can see these people before me now, in the old oak-panelled room, with the copper lamps hanging from the ceiling, and the grated window opening on a little courtyard.

The girl, who was very pale and had black eyes, spoke a few words to her mother; and then the servant was told to take us up into the garret, into the beggars' room; for all the Jews have beggars whom they feed on Fridays. My comrade from Harberg thought this quite natural, but I felt very indignant. For all that, we went behind the servant up a winding staircase, slippery with dirt; and so we came up to the garret, a place boarded round with laths, through the chinks of which we could see a store of dirty linen waiting for the tub. The daylight came in through a loophole in the

roof. Had I felt less low-spirited, I should have thought this an abominable place ; we had only a single chair, and a palliasse spread on the floor, with a blanket, for the two of us. And the servant looked at us as she went out at the door as if she thought we ought to have thanked her kindly for her pains.

I sat down and took my knapsack off my shoulders, feeling very low-spirited, as may well be imagined ; Buche did the same. The servant had begun to go downstairs, when I called out to her—

“Wait a minute ; we’re coming down too ; and we don’t want to break our necks on the staircase.”

After changing our shoes and stockings, we fastened the door with a padlock, and went downstairs into the butcher’s shop to buy some meat. John went to get some bread from the baker’s opposite ; and as we had a right to a place by the fire, we went into the kitchen to make the soup.

At eight o’clock the butcher came down to see us. He had a great Ulm pipe. We were just finishing our supper. He asked us from what country we came. I would not answer him, for I felt too indignant ; but Jean Buche told him that I was a clockmaker at Phalsbourg, whereupon the man began to think I was somebody. He said that his brother travelled in Alsace and Lorraine, in watches, rings, watch-chains, and other articles of goldsmiths’ work and jewellery ; that his name was Samuel Meyer, and that perhaps we had done business together. I told him that I had seen his brother two or three times at Mons. Goulden’s, which was the case. Thereupon he told the servant to carry up a pillow for us ; but he did nothing more, and very soon we went to bed. Exhausted as we were, we

very soon fell asleep. I intended to get up early and run to the arsenal; but I was still asleep when my comrade shook me, and cried—

“There’s the recall.”

I listened, and found he was right. We had only just time to dress ourselves, buckle on our knapsacks, seize our guns, and go down. Just as we came to the place in front of the barracks the roll-call was beginning. When it was over, two waggons came up, and we received fifty ball cartridges per man; Commandant Gêmeau, the captain, and all the officers were there. I saw that it was all over, that I must not count upon anything, and that my letter to Colonel Desmischels might be delivered after the campaign, if I survived and had to finish my seven years. Zebedee looked at me from a distance; I turned away my head. A moment afterwards the word was given—

“Carry arms! Shoulder arms! Files to the left—forward—march!”

The drums beat, and we marched in step. The roofs, houses, windows, lanes, and people seemed defiling past us. We crossed the first bridge, and then the draw-bridge; the drums left off beating; we were going in the direction of Thionville.

Other troops, cavalry and infantry, were going along the same route.

In the evening we came to the village of Beauregard, and the next evening to the village of Vitry, near Thionville, where we remained in cantonments until the 8th of June. I lodged, with Buche, at a fat landed proprietor’s named Mons. Pochon, an honest man, who gave us good white wine to drink, and used to be fond of talking politics, like Mons. Goulden.

During our stay in this village General Schoeffer arrived from Thionville, and we had to take our muskets to be reviewed near a great farm that they called the farm of Silvange.

The country here was thickly wooded. Several of us went together to walk in the environs. One day Zebedee came to fetch me, and took me to see the great foundry of Moyeuivre, where we saw them casting cannon-balls and bombshells. We chatted about Catharine and Mons. Goulden ; he told me to write to them, but I had a kind of fear of receiving news, and turned away my mind as much as I could from Phalsbourg.

On the 8th of June, very early in the morning, the battalion marched out of the village, and went back nearly to Metz, but without entering the city. The gates were shut, and there were cannon on the ramparts, as in time of war. We slept at Chatel, and the next day at Etain, and the day after that at Dannevoux, where I was quartered upon a good patriot named Mons. Sebastien Perrin. He was a rich man. He wanted to know the particulars of everything ; and as a great number of battalions had followed the same route before us, he said—

“ In a month, or perhaps earlier, we shall hear of great things ; all the troops are marching upon Belgium. The Emperor is going to attack the English and the Prussians ! ”

This was our last good billet ; for the next day we arrived at Youg, which is a bad place. On the 12th of June we slept at Vivier ; on the 13th at Cul de Gard. The farther we went on the more troops we met, and as I had already seen this sort of thing in Germany, I said to my comrade, Jean Buche—

“ Now it’s going to get hot ! ”

From all sides and in all directions cavalry, infantry, and artillery were advancing in long lines, covering the roads as far as one could see. It was impossible to see finer weather or more beautiful crops than we saw ; only it was too hot. What astonished me was that I could descry no enemy, either before us or behind us, to the right or to the left. No one knew anything. There was a rumour that, this time, we were going to attack the English. I had already seen the Prussians, the Austrians, Russians, Bavarians, Wurtembergers, and Swedes ; I should know the people of all the nations of Europe, if I was now to encounter the English. I thought, “ If we are to cut each other to pieces, I would rather do it to these than to the Germans. We cannot avoid our fate ; if I am to escape, I shall escape ; if I am to leave my bones here, whether I do all I can to save them or do nothing at all, it will come to the same thing. But we must kill as many of the enemy as we can ; for by that means we shall increase the chance for ourselves.”

Those were the kind of arguments I repeated to myself, and if they did me no good, at any rate they did not do me any harm.

## CHAPTER XVI.

WE had passed the Meuse on the 12th ; on the 13th and 14th we continued marching along bad roads, bordered with fields of corn, oats, barley, and hemp in never-ending succession. It was extraordinarily hot, and I perspired terribly under my knapsack and bag. What a misfortune it is to be poor, and not able to buy a man who will march and stand to be shot at instead of you ! After having gone through wind and rain, and snow and mud in Germany, it was now the time to endure the sun and the dust.

I could see now that the slaughtering was going to begin ; in every direction nothing was heard but the sound of drums and trumpets ; whenever the battalion passed over rising ground, long lines of helmets, lances, and bayonets appeared, as far as the eye could reach. Zebedee, marching with his gun on his shoulder, sometimes cried out to me in a cheerful tone—

“ Well, Joseph, so we and the Prussians are going to look into the whites of each other’s eyes again ! ”

And then I was obliged to reply—

“ Yes, yes, the dance is going to begin again ! ”

Just as if I had been pleased at having to risk my skin again, and perhaps to leave Catharine a widow before she was of age, all about things that did not concern me.

That day, towards seven o'clock, we arrived at Roly. Some hussars already occupied the village, and they made us bivouac in a hollow way, by the side of the ridge.

We had scarcely piled our arms when several field-officers arrived. Commandant Gémeau, who had just dismounted, got on his horse again, and hastened to meet them. They talked together for a moment or two, and then came down into our hollow way, while we all said to one another—

“There’s something going on.”

One of the field-officers, General Pécheux, whom we knew afterwards, had the drums beaten and then called out—

“Form a circle!”

But as the way was too narrow, the soldiers clambered up on the banks on each side; some remained below. All the battalion looked up in expectation; and then the general unrolled a paper, and cried out to us—

“Proclamation of the Emperor!”

When he said that the silence became so deep that one would have thought he was alone in the midst of the field. Every one was listening, from the youngest conscript to Commander Gémeau; and even to-day, when I think of it, fifty years after, it stirs my heart; there was something grand and terrible about it.

This is what the general read to us:—

“Soldiers! To-day is the anniversary of Marengo and of Friedland, which twice decided the fate of Europe. Then, as after Austerlitz and Wagram, we were too generous; we believed the protestations and oaths of the princes whom we allowed to keep their thrones. But to-day, in coalition against us, they attack the independence and the most sacred rights of



France. They have begun the most unjust of aggressions. Let us march forward to meet them; are they and we no longer the men we used to be?"

All the battalion trembled with excitement, and set up a cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" The general held up his hand, and every one was silent, and leant forward still more eagerly to listen—

"Soldiers! At Jena, against these same Prussians who are so arrogant to-day, we were one against three, and at Montmirail one against six. Let those among you who have been prisoners in the hands of the English tell the story of their prison-ships, and of the horrible sufferings they have endured in them.

"The Saxons, the Belgians, the Hanoverians, the soldiers of the Confederation of the Rhine, lament at being obliged to lend their arms to the cause of princes who are enemies of justice and of the rights of every nation. They know that this coalition is insatiable—that after having devoured twelve millions of Poles, twelve millions of Italians, a million of Saxons, six millions of Belgians, it will proceed to devour the secondary States of Germany.

"The madmen! A moment of prosperity has blinded them; the oppression and humiliation of the French people is a task beyond their power. If they enter France, they will find a tomb there.

"Soldiers, we have to make forced marches, to fight battles, and to encounter perils; but with constancy victory will be ours; the rights of man and the happiness of our country will be reconquered. For every Frenchman who has courage, the moment has come to conquer or to die!

"NAPOLÉON."

No one can ever imagine anything like the cry that now arose ; it was a spectacle that elevated one's soul ; one would have thought the Emperor had breathed into us his spirit of battles, and we were ready to cut down everything.

The general had been gone a long time, and still the cries continued ; and for my part I was glad, for I felt that all this was the truth : that the Prussians, Austrians, and Russians, who at one time talked of nothing but the deliverance of nations, had taken advantage of the first opportunity to seize everything for themselves ; that all the grand talk about liberty which they had put forward in 1813 to draw out the young men against us, all the promises of constitutions they had given, had been put aside. I looked upon them as rascals, as people who did not keep their word, who deceived the people, and had only one little, mean, miserable idea—namely, that of always remaining in the best place, with their children and descendants, good or bad, just or unjust, without regard for the law of God.

That is what I saw. This proclamation seemed to me a very fine one. I even thought that Father Goulden would be much pleased with it, because the Emperor had not forgotten the rights of man, which are—liberty, equality, justice, and all those grand ideas which cause men, instead of acting like animals, to respect themselves and also to respect the rights of their neighbours.

Thus our courage was greatly heightened by these strong and just words. The old soldiers laughed, and said—

“ This time we shall not have to wait long. We shall fall upon the Prussians after the first march.”

And the conscripts, who had never heard the bullets

whistling yet, rejoiced more than the others. Buche's eyes gleamed like those of a cat; he had seated himself by the roadside, with his bag open on the bank, and was slowly whetting his sabre and trying its edge on the tip of his shoe. Others were sharpening their bayonets, or looking to the flint in their musket-locks, a thing that always has to be done during a campaign, on the eve of an engagement. At such times a thousand ideas go through a man's head; and he knits his brows and sets his lips hard, and has an ugly look in his face.

The sun was sinking lower and lower behind the cornfields; some detachments went out to forage for wood in the village, and they brought back with them also some onions and leeks, salt, and even the quarters of cows slung on great poles over their shoulders.

You should have seen what merry faces there were round the fires when the soup-kettles began to hum, and the smoke curled upward towards the sky. One man talked of Lutzen, another of Austerlitz, another of Wagram, Jena, Friedland, of Spain and Portugal, and all the countries in the world. All were talking together, but none were listened to but the old soldiers with their arms covered with stripes, who could talk best, and could point out the positions with a finger, on the ground, and explain the wheelings to right and left, and the manœuvres of a battle. Listening to them, a man could fancy he saw it all before him.

Each one had his tin spoon at his button-hole, and thought—

“The soup's getting on famously; and this is fine fat meat.”

By this time night had come. After the distribution

the order had been given to put out the fires, and not to sound the retreat; and this meant that the enemy was not far off, and that they feared to excite him.

The moon began to shine. Buche and I ate out of the same bowl; when we had finished, he talked to me for more than two hours about the life they led at Harberg, and how miserable it was when they had to drag fifteen or eighteen cubic feet of wood on a sledge, with the chance of being crushed to death, especially at the time when the snows melted. The life of a soldier, with its good soup and good bread, the regular rations, the good warm clothing, the stout shirts of coarse linen, all appeared admirable to him. He had had no notion of such good living; and the only thing that troubled him was how he should let his two brothers, Gaspard and Jacob, know what a good position he was in, that they might enlist when they were old enough.

"Yes," I said to him, "it's all very well; but the Russians, the English, the Prussians—you don't think of them."

"I laugh at them," he answered. "My sabre cuts like a paring-knife, and my bayonet pierces like a needle. It is they, rather, who should be afraid to meet me."

We were the best friends in the world; I was almost as fond of him as of my old comrades, Klipfel, Fürst, and Zebedee. He was very fond of me too; I think he would have been cut to pieces to get me out of a scrape. Old fellow-soldiers never forget one another; within my time, old Harwig, whom I knew later at Phalsbourg, used still to receive a pension from his old comrade, Bernadotte, King of Sweden. If I had become a king, I would also have given a pension to

Jean Buche ; for if he had not much mind, he had a good heart, and that is worth more.

While we were chatting together, Zebedee came up and clapped me on the shoulder.

“Don’t you smoke, Joseph ?” he said to me.

“I have no tobacco.”

Immediately he gave me half a packet.

I saw that he still loved me in spite of the difference of our grades, and that softened me. He could hardly contain himself for joy at the thought that we were going to attack the Prussians.

“What a revenge !” he cried. “No quarter ! they must pay us for everything—from the Katzbach to Soissons !”

One would have thought that these same Prussians and English were not going to defend themselves, and that we ran no risk of cannon-balls and musket-bullets as at Lutzen, Gross-Beren, and Leipsic, and everywhere. But what are you to say to people who don’t remember anything, and who see everything in glowing colours ? I quietly smoked my pipe, and replied—

“Yes, yes, we shall serve them out, the vagabonds !—we shall tumble them over ! They will find us tough fellows !”

I had let Jean Buche fill his pipe ; and as we were to mount guard, Zebedee, towards nine o’clock, went to relieve the first sentinels, at the head of his picket. For me, I stepped out of our circle, and lay down a few paces away, with my head on my bag, at the edge of a furrow. The weather was so hot, that one heard the crickets chirping long after the sun had gone down ; some stars were shining in the sky ; not a breath of air blew across the plain ; the corn-stalks were quite up-

right, and in the distance the village clocks struck nine, ten, eleven o'clock. At last I fell asleep. It was the night between the 14th and 15th of June, 1815.

Between two and three in the morning Zebedee came and shook me.

"Get up," he said, "and away."

Buche had stretched himself beside me ; we both got up. It was our turn to relieve guard. It was still night ; but the dawn had spread a white line along the margin of the sky, over the corn-fields. Thirty paces off Lieutenant Bretonville was waiting for us, surrounded by a picquet. It's hard work getting up when one is sleeping so peacefully, after a march of ten hours. We went up to the picquet, buckling our bags as we came along. After we had marched together about a couple of hundred paces, I stopped behind a hedge to relieve the sentinel opposite Roly. The watchword was "*Fleurus and Jemappes!*" That comes back upon me all at once. How many things sleep in our minds for years and years ! I had not thought of that watchword since 1815.

I fancy I can still see the sentinel marching back into the road while I renew my priming by the light of the stars ; and I can hear in the distance the other sentinels marching slowly to and fro, while the footsteps of the retiring picquet die away behind the hill.

I began to march to and fro alongside the hedge, with my musket shouldered. The village, with its little straw roofs, and further on its steeple of slate, peered up from among the crops. A mounted hussar, on sentry in the middle of the road, was looking out, with his carbine resting on his thigh ; and that was all I could see.

For a long time I remained there, thinking, looking out, and pacing to and fro. Everything slept. The white line on the horizon became broader.

That lasted more than half an hour. The morning light spread grey over the country. Two or three quails called and answered each other from various parts of the plain. I stood still, feeling quite melancholy, for the sound brought back to me the remembrance of Quatre-Vents, Danne, and Baraques du Bois-de-Chênes; I thought, "At home, in our corn-fields, the quails are also singing on the margin of the wood of Bonnefontaine. Is Catharine sleeping, and Aunt Grethel, and all the town? The National Guards of Nancy have relieved us now!" And I could fancy I saw the sentinels of the two powder-magazines, and the guard at the gates—in fact, innumerable ideas passed through my mind; when all at once I heard the galloping of a horse in the distance. I looked, but at first could see nothing. After a few minutes the galloping sound passed on into the village; and then all was silent, except that I could hear a confused murmur. What was the meaning of that? A minute afterwards the horseman came riding out of Roly towards us, at full speed; I advanced to the margin of the hedge, with my musket cocked, and cried—

"Who goes there?"

"France!"

"What regiment?"

"Twelfth chasseurs—orderly."

"Pass!"

He hurried on his way faster than ever. I heard him rein in his horse in the middle of our encampment, and cry—

“The commandant!”

I advanced to the ridge of the hill to see what was going on. Directly afterwards there was a great stir; the chasseur, who had not dismounted, was speaking to Commandant Gémeau, and soldiers were coming up. I listened, but it was too far off to hear anything. The chasseur went away, riding up the ridge. Everything seemed in commotion, and every one was talking loud, and gesticulating.

All at once the *réveillée* was beaten. The picket that relieved the sentries was turning the corner of the lane. As Zebedee came up he seemed to me quite pale.

“Come on!” he said, as he went by.

There were two more sentinels on the left, waiting to be relieved. There’s no talking while men are under arms; but, nevertheless, Zebedee said to me, in a whisper—

“Joseph, we are betrayed; Bourmont, the general of the advanced guard division, and five other rascals like him, have just gone over to the enemy.”

His voice trembled. All my blood seemed to give a great leap in my veins; and looking at the other men of the picquet, two old soldiers, with stripes on their arms, I saw that their grey moustaches were quivering, they rolled their eyes ferociously, as if looking for some one to kill; but they said nothing.

We quickened our pace to relieve the two other sentinels. Some minutes afterwards, when we came to the bivouac, we saw the battalion already under arms, and prepared to start. Fury and indignation were painted on every face; the drums were beating. We took our place in the ranks. The commandant and the captain adjutant major on horseback in front of the battalion,



were waiting, looking as pale as death. I remember that the commandant all at once drew his sword to make the drums cease beating, as if he wanted to say something ; but he could not arrange his thoughts ; and he began shouting, like a madman—

“ Ah, rascals !—ah, miserable chouans ! Vive l’Empereur !—no quarter !”

He stammered, and did not know what he was saying ; but all the battalion thought he made a very good speech, and all began to howl out like wolves—

“ Forward ! Forward !—against the enemy !—no quarter !”

We went through the village at the double ; the last soldier was indignant at not seeing the Prussians immediately. It was not till an hour afterwards, when each man had made his own reflections, that we began to swear and to exclaim ; first we grumbled and muttered, and then cried out quite loud, so that the battalion seemed to be in a state of mutiny. Some said that all the officers of Louis XVIII. ought to be exterminated ; others cried out that they wanted to betray us all in a body ; and others even declared that the marshals were traitors, and that they ought to be brought before a court-martial to be shot ; and other things of the kind.

Then the commandant ordered a halt, and passed before us, crying that the traitors were too late ; that they were to attack that very day, and the enemy would not have time to profit by the treason before he would be fallen upon and overthrown.

These words calmed the fury of the majority. We resumed our march, and repeated, as we went along, that the treason had been too late.

But our anger was turned into joy, when, at about

ten o'clock, we heard the rumbling of cannon on the left, five or six leagues off, on the other side of the Sambre. Then the men waved their shakos on the points of their bayonets, and began to shout—

“Forward! Vive l'Empereur!”

Many old soldiers wept with emotion. Over all this great plain there arose one immense cry; directly one regiment was silent, another took it up. The cannon kept on sounding, and we walked faster and faster; and as we had been marching on Charleroi since seven o'clock, there came an order by a staff officer, commanding us to bear to the right.

I also remember that in all the villages through which we passed, men, women, and children stood at the windows and doors looking out at us; and that they lifted their hands with a joyous air, crying—

“The French!—the French!”

One could see that these people liked us, and that they were of the same blood with us; and even during the two halts that we made they came out with their good home-made bread with a great knife stuck in the crust, and great jugs of black beer, both of which they offered us without asking payment. We had, so to speak, come to their rescue without knowing it. Nobody in their country knew anything that was going on, which shows the cleverness of the Emperor, for in that corner of the Sambre and the Meuse we were more than a hundred thousand men, and not the least intelligence had reached the enemy. The treason of Bourmont prevented us from surprising them while they were scattered in their cantonments; all would have been finished at a blow; but now it would be much more difficult to exterminate them.

We continued marching all the afternoon, through the great heat, along the dusty roads. The further we went on, the more we saw other regiments of cavalry and infantry in front of us. We seemed to be massed together, so to speak, more and more, for behind us fresh regiments kept coming up. Towards five o'clock, we reached a village where battalions and squadrons were defiling over a bridge of masonry. As we went through the village, which our advanced guard had carried, we saw some Prussians stretched by the roadside to right and left. I said to John Buche—

“Look, those are Prussians! We saw plenty of them about Lutzen and Leipsic; and you'll see some of them too, John.”

“So much the better,” he replied. “That's what I should like of all things.”

The village we were going through was called Chatelet; the river we crossed was the Sambre; its water was yellow, full of clay, and deep. Those who are unfortunate enough to fall into it have great trouble in getting out, for the banks are very steep, as we found out afterwards.

On the other side of the bridge we were made to bivouac along the bank of the river. We were not altogether in the advanced guard, for some hussars had passed through before us; but we were the foremost infantry of Gérard's corps.

During all the rest of that day the fourth corps was defiling over the bridge, and we heard at night that the army had passed the Sambre, and that there had been fighting near Charleroi, at Marchiennes and at Jumet.

## CHAPTER XVII.

So soon as we were on the further bank of the *Sambre* we piled our arms in an orchard, and each man might light his pipe and take breath, looking at the hussars, the chasseurs, the artillery, and infantry as they defiled over the bridge hour after hour to take up their position in the plain.

In front of us was a forest of beech-trees ; it extended in the direction of *Fleurus*, and might be three leagues long from one end to the other. In the interior of it great yellow spaces were to be seen ; they were stubble fields, and even patches of corn, instead of broom, furze, and brambles, as in our parts. Some twenty houses, old and rickety places, were built on the other side of the bridge, for *Le Chatelet* is a very large village, larger than the town of *Saverne*.

Among the battalions and squadrons which were incessantly marching past appeared men, women, and children with jugs of beer, strong as wine, bread, and very strong white brandy, which they sold to us for a few sous. *Buche* and I broke a crust together, looking at these things, and even joking with the girls, who are fair and very good-looking in these parts.

Near us we could see the little village of *Catelineau*, and far off on our left, between the wood and the river, the village of *Gilly*.

The sound of musketry, discharges of cannon, and platoon firing continued in that direction. The news soon came that the Prussians, driven back from Charleroi by the Emperor, had taken position in squares at the edge of the forest. We expected every minute to be ordered to march and cut off their retreat. But between seven and eight o'clock the firing ceased. The Prussians had retreated upon Fleurus, after having lost one of their squares; the other had taken shelter in the forest, and presently we saw two regiments of hussars arrive; they took up their position on our right along the bank of the Sambre.

Soon after the rumour spread that General Le Tort, of the Guard, had been struck by a ball in the body, in the very neighbourhood where, as a boy, he used to drive a farmer's cattle to pasture. What astonishing things one witnesses in life! This general had been fighting for twenty years in every part of Europe, and it was just here that Death had been waiting for him!

It was about eight o'clock in the evening, and the general opinion was that we should remain at Chatelet until our three divisions had passed by. An old bald-headed peasant, in a blue blouse and cotton cap, lean as a goat, who kept near us, told Captain Gregoire that at the other side of the forest in a hollow were the villages of Fleurus and Lambusart, the latter a small place, more to the right; that for at least three weeks the Prussians had had men in these villages, and that fresh ones had come during the last two days. He also told us that along the great white road bordered with trees, which could be seen stretching away two good leagues on our left, the Belgians and Hanoverians held positions at Gosselies and Quatre Bras; that it was the high

road to Brussels, where the English, the Hanoverians, and the Belgians had all their forces; while the Prussians, four or five leagues to the right, occupied the Namur road; that between them and the English, from the plateau of Quatre Bras to that of Ligny, behind Fleurus, there extended a good high road, along which their orderlies were riding from morning to night; so that the English got all the news from the Prussians, and the Prussians knew of all the movements of the English; that they could thus mutually help each other, and send each other men and cannon and ammunition along this road.

Naturally enough, when I heard that, the thought at once came into my head that the best thing we could do would be to occupy the road, and prevent them from helping each other. A man's good sense ought to tell him that, and I was not the only one who had this idea, but we said nothing for fear of interrupting the old fellow. In five minutes he had half the men of the battalion standing round him in a circle. He was smoking a clay pipe, and pointed out the different positions with the stem. Having been a parcel-carrier between Le Chatelet and Fleurus and Namur, he knew every detail concerning the country, and saw what was going on from day to day. He complained a great deal of the Prussians, saying that they were proud, insolent creatures, and dangerous to women; that one could never satisfy them; that the officers boasted of having driven us before them from Dresden to Paris, and declared that we had run like hares.

That made me feel very indignant. I knew that they had been two against one of us at Leipsic; that the Russians, Austrians, Saxons, Wurtemburgers,

Bavarians, and Swedes—all Europe, in fact—had come down upon us when three-fourths of our army were sick from the effects of typhus fever, hunger, and cold, and the hardships of marching and countermarching; and that all this had not prevented our beating them thoroughly at Hanau, and beating them fifty times besides, when they had three men to our one, in Champagne, Alsace, the Vosges, and everywhere. These boasts of the Prussians disgusted me; I felt a hatred towards their race, and I thought—

“Such rascals as those are enough to turn a man’s blood!”

The old man also said that the Prussians kept repeating that they were soon going to enjoy themselves in Paris, and drink good French wines, and that the French army was nothing but a band of robbers.

When I heard that, I said within myself—“Joseph, this is too much. You must have no more mercy upon them. It must be the extermination of extermination!”

Half-past nine chimed from the steeple of the village of Chatelet. The hussars blew the retreat, and each man found a place for himself behind a hedge or a fence, or in a furrow, to lie down and sleep. When the general of Schoeffer’s brigade came and ordered the battalion to move to the other side of the wood, to act as an advanced guard, I saw at once that our unfortunate battalion was always to be the advanced guard, as in 1813. It’s a bad thing for a regiment to get a reputation; the men are changed, but the number remains. The 6th Light Infantry was considered a very fine number, and I had experience of what it cost to have a good number like ours.

Those of us who at first wanted to sleep, did not feel sleepy long; for when you know that the enemy is very near, and the men say to one another—"The Prussians are perhaps there, waiting in ambush for us in that wood," it makes you keep your eyes open.

Some hussars, thrown out as skirmishers to the right and to the left of the road, rode in advance of the column. We marched at the ordinary step, our captains in the spaces between the companies, and Commandant Gêmeau riding in the centre of the battalion on his little grey mare.

Before we started, each man had received a three-pound loaf and two pounds of rice; and that is the way the campaign opened for us.

It was a magnificent moonlight night; all the country round about, and even the forest, for three-quarters of a league before us, shone like silver. I could not help thinking of the wood at Leipsic where I had slipped in a clayey hole, with two Prussian hussars, while poor Klipfel was being cut into a thousand pieces at a little distance off; and this idea kept me very much on the alert. Nobody spoke; Buche himself raised his head, and clenched his teeth; and Zebedeo, on the left of the company, did not glance in my direction, but kept his eyes fixed on the wood like all the rest.

It took us nearly an hour to get to the wood. When we were two hundred paces from it, the order was given to halt. The hussars fell back upon the flanks of the battalion, and a company was sent forward to skirmish in the wood. We waited for about five minutes; and as no disturbance or alarm followed, we then resumed our march. The way we took in the forest was by a



cart-road of tolerable width. The column marched in step in the shadow. Every now and then there were great open spaces which gave us light and air. Some trees had been recently cut down, and the white logs, built up into stacks within wooden frames, gleamed out every now and then. Nothing else was to be seen, and all was silent around.

Then Buche said to me in a whisper—

“I like to smell the scent of the wood, though ; it reminds me of Harberg.”

I thought to myself — “I care very little for the scent of the wood ; if we only escape getting a taste of leaden bullets, that’s the chief thing.”

At length, after two hours’ marching, we could see light through the end of the thicket, and we arrived safely at the extremity of the wood without having met any one. The hussars who had accompanied us went away directly, and the battalion stood at ease.

I never saw such a corn country as that we were now in. The wheat was just flowering, and still a little green ; the barley was almost ripe. The growing crops extended as far as one could see. We all stood looking, in profound silence ; and then I saw that the old peasant had not deceived us, for beyond a sort of hollow, about two thousand paces in front of us, rose the summit of an old steeple, and around it some slate-covered gables on which the moon was shining. This must be Fleurus. Nearer to us, on our right, were to be seen some thatched cottages, some houses, and another steeple ; this, no doubt, was Lambusart. But much farther off, at the end of the great plain, more than a league distant, and at the back of Fleurus, the ground swelled up into hills, and these hills shone with

innumerable fires. One could very plainly see three great villages built along these heights, from right to left, and we afterwards learned that the one nearest to us was Saint Amand, the middle one Ligny, and the farthest, which was at least two good leagues distant, Sombref. We could see this plainer than in the daylight, on account of the enemy's fires. The army of the Prussians was posted there, in the houses, the orchards, and the fields. And behind this line of three villages we could see another, higher up and further off, on the left, where fires were burning likewise; it was Bry, where these vagabonds, no doubt, had their reserves.

I saw all that very well, and I could understand that the position would be very difficult to take. So there we stood, looking at this grand spectacle.

In the plain on our left, fires were also burning; but it was clear that these belonged to the third corps, which, towards eight o'clock, had turned the corner of the forest, after having driven back the Prussians, and who had stopped in some village at a considerable distance from Fleurus. Some fires along the margin of the wood, on the same line with us, also belonged to our army; I think I remember that we had troops on both sides, but I am not quite sure; at any rate, the great mass was on our left.

Sentinels were at once posted in the environs; and then every man lay down on the margin of the wood, without lighting any fires, and waited for further orders.

General Schoeffer came back once more that night, with some hussar officers; Commandant Gêmeau was watching, fully equipped; and they talked together, quite loud, within twenty paces of us. The general

said that our army corps was still defiling, but was very much behind time, and would not have completely arrived even by the morrow; and I afterwards found that he was right; for our fourth battalion, which was to have met us at Chatelet, did not come till the day after the battle, when we had been almost all killed by those rascals at Ligny, and had only four hundred men left; whereas, if it had been there, we should have charged together, and it would have had its share of glory.

As I had been on guard the night before, I stretched myself quietly at the foot of a tree, by the side of Buche, with our comrades around me. It was about one o'clock in the morning. This was to be the day of the terrible battle of Ligny. Half of those who were sleeping around us were to leave their bones in these villages where we saw the fires burning, or in these great plains, where crops of all kinds were growing so richly; they were to fertilise the fields for centuries for the growth of wheat, barley, and oats. If they had known this, not one of them would have slept so well; for men love their lives, and it would be a sad reflection for a man to think, "To-day is the last day on which I shall breathe."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

DURING this night the air was heavy ; and, tired as I was, I woke up every hour. My comrades were sleeping, and some of them talked in their dreams. Buche never stirred. Close to us, our guns, arranged in stacks, shone in the moonlight.

I listened. In the distance, on the left, I could hear cries of “*Qui vive ?*” and in our front, the cry, “*Wer da ?*”

Much nearer to us could be seen the sentinels of our battalion, standing motionless at two hundred paces distance, half hidden in the corn. I got up quietly and looked round ; in the direction of Sombref, at least two leagues on our right, there were great murmurs, which swelled and increased, and then suddenly ceased. They sounded like fitful gusts of wind among the leaves ; but there was not a breath of wind, nor was there a drop of dew falling ; and I thought—

“They are the cannons and powder-waggon<sup>s</sup> of the Prussians galloping there, on the Namur road, and fresh squadrons and battalions of them coming up. Good heavens, what a position we shall be in to-morrow, with that mass of men before us, increased and reinforced as they are from hour to hour !”

They had extinguished their fires at Saint Amand and Ligny, but in the direction of Sombref there were more fires than ever ; Prussian regiments who had come

up by forced marches, were no doubt cooking their soup there. Innumerable thoughts coursed through my head but I laid myself down again, and slept for an hour. More than once I said to myself—

“I have escaped from Lutzen, Leipsic, and Hanau ; why should I not get over this too ?”

But these hopes that I thus cherished did not prevent me from acknowledging that it would be a terrible time.

At length I had gone fast asleep, when Padoue, the drum-major, began with his own hands to beat the *réveillée*. He walked up and down by the margin of the forest, and seemed to take pleasure in the sounds his drumsticks produced. The officers were already assembled on a hill among the corn, and were looking towards Fleurus and talking to each other.

Our *réveillée* is always sounded before that of the Russians, Prussians, and Austrians, and all our other enemies ; it is like the song of the lark at the first dawning of day. The others, with their great drums, begin after muttering rolls that put you in mind of a funeral. But their trumpets have pretty airs to sound *réveillée*, while ours give only three or four sharp notes, as if to say—

“Rouse up ! We’ve no time to lose !”

Every one jumped up. The magnificent sun was rising over the cornfields, and one could feel already how hot it would be towards noon. Buche, and all the men who were to do fatigue duty, went away with their buckets to bring water, while others shook lighted tow into a handful of straw, to light the fires. There was no lack of wood, for every one got an armful from the places where it had been cut. Corporal Duhem, Ser-

geant Rabot, and Zebedee came to talk to me. We had all gone out together in 1813 ; they had been at my wedding at Quatre-Vents ; and, in spite of the difference of rank, they always were well inclined towards Joseph.

"Well," cried Zebedee to me, "so the dance is going to begin again?"

"Yes!" I replied.

And remembering all at once the words of poor Sergeant Pinto, on the morning of Lutzen, I replied, with a wink of my eye—

"Yes, Zebedee, as Sergeant Pinto said, it will be a battle where one may win the cross through blows with the musket-stock and bayonet-thrusts ; and if it's not one's luck to get it, one must not count upon it any more!"

Then they all began to laugh, and Zebedee cried out—

"Yes, poor old fellow, he deserved it well ; but it's more difficult to reach than the top of the climbing-pole at a fair."

We all laughed ; and as they had a gourd of brandy, we broke a crust together, as we watched the movements of the troops, which began to be visible. Buche had come back one of the first with his bucket. He stood behind us with his ears pricked up, like a fox who scents prey. Files of horsemen were coming out of the wood and traversing the plain in the direction of Saint Amand, the great village on the left of Fleurus.

"That," said Zebedee, "is the light cavalry of Pajol, going to deploy in skirmishing order ; those yonder are Excelmans' dragoons. When the others have reconnoitred the position they will advance in line, I can tell

you that; it's always done in the same manner, and the guns will arrive with the infantry. Then the cavalry will move to the right or to the left, it will retire upon the wings, and the infantry will be in the first line. The attacking columns will be formed on the good roads and in the fields, and the affair will begin with a cannonade for twenty minutes or half-an-hour, more or less; the first firing is always between the artillerymen. When they've had enough of it, and half the batteries are dismounted, the Emperor chooses a good moment to send us out; but then we get our share of bullets as we come nearer. We advance in quick time, in good order, with sloped arms, and we always finish at the double, because of the bullets, which make us impatient. I tell you all this, conscripts, so that you may not be surprised when it comes."

More than twenty conscripts had come and taken their places around us. The cavalry still continued emerging from the wood.

"I'll wager," said Corporal Duhem, "that the 4th corps has been on the march behind us since day-break."

And Rabot said that it would require time for them to get into line, because of the bad places they had to cross in the wood.

We were then like generals deliberating among themselves; and we also looked at the position of the Prussians around the villages, in the orchards, and behind the hedges, which last are six or seven feet high in this country. A great number of their cannon had been set up in batteries between Ligny and Saint Amand; one could plainly see the bronze flashing in the sun, which made one think of a good many things.

"I am sure," said Zebedee, "that they have provided themselves everywhere; that they have dug ditches, and pierced holes in the walls, and that it would have been a good thing to have pushed forward last night, when their squares retreated, to the first village on the heights. If we were on a level with them all would go well; but to climb over hedges, under the enemy's fire, that's what costs men, unless something is behind it, according to the Emperor's habit."

In this way the old soldiers were gossiping all about us; and the conscripts listened eagerly.

Meanwhile the soup-kettles were hanging over the fires; but we were expressly forbidden to use our bayonets in the cooking, for it would blunt them.

It might be seven o'clock, and everybody thought the battle would be fought at Saint Amand, the one of the three villages that was most on our left, surrounded with hedges and tufted trees, with a great round tower in the centre; and higher up in the rear, some more houses, with a winding road bordered with rough stones. All the officers said—"The affair will be out yonder."

They said so because our troops, coming from Charleroi, were assembling in the plain below; infantry and cavalry, all were bearing in that direction—the whole corps of Vandamme, and Gérard's division. Thousands and thousands of helmets glittered in the sun. Buche, who stood near me, said—

"Oh! oh! oh!—look, Joseph, look!—there are more and more of them coming."

Innumerable lines of bayonets could be seen in the same direction, as far as the eye could reach.



The Prussians extended their lines more and more on the ridge behind the villages, where the windmills stood.

This movement lasted till eight o'clock. Nobody felt hungry, but we ate all the same that we might not regret it afterwards, for when a battle has once begun you have to wait till it's over, if it should last for two days.

Between eight and nine o'clock the first battalions of our division also debouched from the wood. The officers came and shook hands with their comrades, but the staff still remained behind.

All at once we saw some hussars and chasseurs pass by to lengthen our line of battle on the right; they were Morin's cavalry. The idea immediately occurred to us that when the combat should begin in the direction of Saint Amand, and the Prussians had directed all their forces on that side, we were to fall on their flank by the village of Ligny. But the same idea struck the Prussians, for from that moment they did not defile as far as Saint Amand, but stopped at Ligny; they even came lower down; and we could plainly see their officers posting soldiers among the hedges, in the gardens, behind low walls, and in outbuildings. We considered their position a very strong one. They continued to descend into a hollow of the ground between Ligny and Fleurus, and that surprised us, for we did not yet know that a brook flows lower down, dividing the village into two parts, and that they were then fortifying the houses on our side; and we did not know that if we had the luck to drive them back they would have their refuge higher up, and would still keep us under fire.

If one knew everything beforehand, in affairs of this

kind, one would never dare to begin, because there would seem no hope of succeeding in such a dangerous enterprise; but these things only show themselves by degrees, and we were this day to discover many that we did not expect.

Towards half-past eight o'clock several of our regiments had passed the wood; soon the rappel was beaten, and all the battalions got under arms. General Count Gérard and his staff came up. They galloped past and went on to the hill above Fleurus, without taking any notice of us.

Almost immediately the fusillade began. Some riflemen of Vandamme's corps approached the village, on the left; two pieces of artillery started directly afterwards, driven by mounted artillerymen. They fired five or six rounds from the top of the hill; then the firing ceased; our riflemen were at Fleurus, and we saw four or five hundred Prussians ascend the ridge beyond, towards Ligny.

General Gérard looked at this little engagement; then he came with his staff officers, and passed slowly in front of our battalions, looking at us thoughtfully, as if to scan our appearance. He was a dark man, with a round face; he might be about forty-five years old; the lower part of his face was broad, with a pointed chin and a large head. One sees many peasants at home who resemble him; and they are not the most stupid ones. He said nothing to us; and when he had traversed our line from one end to the other, all the commandants and the colonels assembled on our right. We were ordered to stand at ease; the staff-officers were flying to and fro like the wind; one could see them in all directions; but no one else stirred. Only a rumour

spread that Marshal Grouchy was in chief command over us, and that the Emperor was attacking the English, four leagues away, on the road to Brussels.

This news did not put us in good-humour; more than one man said—

“It’s not to be wondered at that we’ve been here since the morning doing nothing; if the Emperor were with us the battle would have begun long ago; the Prussians would not have had time to post themselves.”

That was what they said; and it shows how unjust men are; for three hours afterwards, towards noon, thousands of voices began to cry, “Vive l’Empereur!” on the left; Napoleon was coming. These cries came whirling onward like a tempest, and were soon prolonged as far as opposite to Sombref. We now thought all was well; and the very thing we had reproached Marshal Grouchy for, we now considered well done, because the Emperor did it.

The order came immediately for us to advance five hundred paces, bearing to the right, and we started across the fields, trampling down the barley and corn, rye and oats, that bent before us. The great line of battle on our left kept its place.

As we drew near to a great road that we had not yet seen, and just when we had discovered Fleurus, a thousand paces in our front, with its rivulet bordered by willows, suddenly there was a cry—

“Halt!”

Through the whole division there ran a murmur—

“Here he is!”

The Emperor was coming up, on horseback, surrounded by a small staff; in the distance, one could only recognise him by his grey capote and his hat; his

carriage, surrounded by lancers, was some distance behind. He entered Fleurus by the high road, and remained more than an hour in the village, while we stood roasting in the corn-fields without.

When the hour was over, and we began to think that this would never end, some files of orderly officers rode away, with loosened rein, bending their heads forward between their horses' ears; two of them stopped when they came to General Count Gérard; one stayed with him, and the other rode off again. After that, we had to wait again; and then, on a sudden, from one end of the line to the other, the bands of the regiments struck up. There was a great noise of drums and trumpets, and all began to march. The great line that extended very far behind Saint Amand to the wood began to turn with the left wing in advance. As it passed behind our division, we made a slanting movement towards the right; and then again came the cry—

“Halt!”

We were opposite the road which leads out of Fleurus. We had a white wall on our left; behind this wall rose some trees and a great house, and before us a red brick windmill rose like a great tower.

Hardly had we halted when the Emperor came out of this mill with three or four generals, and two peasants in blouses, old men, carrying their cotton caps in their hands. Then the division set up a cry of “Vive l'Empereur!” and I had a good view of him, for he was advancing just opposite to the battalion, by a footpath, with his arms crossed behind his back and his head bent, listening to something one of the bald old peasants was saying. He took no notice of our cries; twice he turned round, and pointed to the village of Ligny. I

saw him as plainly as I used to see Father Goulden, when we sat opposite each other at the table. He had become much stouter and sallowier since the Leipsic days; if it had not been for his grey capote and his hat, I think it would have been difficult to recognise him; he looked much older, and his cheeks were flaccid. This was no doubt caused by the regrets he felt in the island of Elba, thinking of all the faults he had committed; for he was a man who had plenty of good sense, and could see his faults plainly. He had destroyed the revolution that had set him up; he had called home the emigrants who would not have him; he had married an archduchess who stayed in Vienna; he had chosen his greatest enemies for his counsellors. In fact, he had put back everything into the state in which it was before the revolution; nothing was wanting to complete it but Louis XVIII., and at last the kings had put Louis XVIII. in his place. Now he had come back to overthrow the legitimate monarch; some called him a despot, and others a Jacobin. It was unfortunate, inasmuch as he himself had arranged everything for recalling the Bourbons. He had nothing left now but his army; if he lost this, he lost everything; because, in the nation, some wanted liberty, like Father Goulden, and others wanted order and peace, like Aunt Grethel and myself, and all those who were carried off to the war.

These things must have made him reflect terribly. He had lost everybody's confidence. The old soldiers alone preserved their attachment to him; they were ready to conquer or to die, and with such ideas one is sure to achieve one or other of these objects, and all is very simple and clear; but many people had very different

ideas, and for my part I cared much more for Catharine than for the Emperor.

When he came to the corner of the wall, where the hussars were waiting for him, he mounted his horse; and General Gérard, who had seen him, rode down at a gallop into the highway. He turned round for a moment or two to listen to the general, and then they rode into Fleurus together.

And again we had to wait.

Towards two o'clock General Gérard came back again. We were made to incline to the right for the third time; and the whole division marched in columns along the high road of Fleurus, the cannons and artillery-waggons occupying the intervals between the brigades. No one can describe what a terrible dust there was. Buche said to me—

“At the first pond we come to I must have a drink, let it cost what it may.”

But we did not come upon any water.

The bands continued to play. Behind us came masses of cavalry, chiefly of dragoons. We were still marching, when the roll of musketry and the noise of cannon began; it sounded like the bursting of a dyke, when the water comes rushing down carrying everything before it.

I knew what it was, but Buche turned quite pale. He said nothing, but looked at me with an astonished air.

“Yes, yes, Jean,” I said to him; “the others yonder are beginning the attack on Saint Amand; but our turn will come directly.”

The rolling noise became twice as loud. The bands had left off playing, and on all sides arose the cry—

“Halt!”

The division stopped on the high road; the cannoneers came forward from the intervals, and put their pieces in position, fifty paces in front of us, with the caissons behind them.

We were standing opposite to Ligny. Nothing was to be seen but a white line of houses, half hidden by orchards, the steeple rising above them, banks of yellow clayey earth, trees, hedges, and palisades. We were twelve to fifteen thousand men, without reckoning the cavalry; and we waited for the order to attack.

The battle in the direction of Saint Amand continued; and masses of smoke rose up into the sky.

While we were waiting for our turn to come, I thought with extraordinary tenderness of Catharine; the idea that she would have a child came into my mind, and I prayed to God to preserve my life; but the good thought also came to me that, if I should die, our child would be there to console them all—Catharine, Aunt Grethel, and Father Goulden; that if it should be a boy, they would call him Joseph, and caress him; that Mons. Goulden would dandle him on his knees, that Aunt Grethel would love him, and that Catharine, when she embraced him, would think of me. I said to myself that I should not be altogether dead. But I preferred living, for all that, and I felt sure this would be a terrible affair.

Buche, too, said to me—

“Listen to me. I’ve a cross—if I am killed—you must promise me something.” And he took my hand and wrung it.

“I promise you,” I answered.

“Then listen; it is here, on my breast. I want you

to carry it back to Harberg, and have it hung up in the chapel, in memory of Jean Buche, who died believing in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

He spoke seriously, and I thought his request a very natural one; for some die for the rights of man, others die thinking of their mother, and others justify themselves by the example of those just men who sacrificed themselves for their fellow-men; it is all the same kind of thing, though people call it by different names, according to their way of looking at it.

So I promised to do what he asked; and we waited for almost another half-hour. All who came out of the wood took up a position close to us; we also saw the cavalry deploying on our right, as if to attack Sombref.

On our side, till half-past two, not a musket-shot had been fired, when suddenly an aide-de-camp of the Emperor came riding up at full gallop; and I thought directly—"Here's our turn coming! Now may God watch over us; for we, poor wretches, are unable to save ourselves from a massacre like this!"

I had hardly had time to make these reflections, when two battalions set out with some cavalry, on the right of the high road in the direction of Sombref, where the Prussian uhlands and hussars were forming in line opposite our dragoons. These two battalions had the luck to remain all day in position on the road, watching the enemy's cavalry, while we had to take the village where the Prussians were posted in force.

It was striking three o'clock when the columns of attack were formed; I was in the one to the left, which advanced first at the quick march along a winding way. In the direction of Ligny there was a great brick building; it was round, and pierced with holes; it



looked upon the road by which we were mounting, and we looked at it over the corn-fields. The second, or middle column, started after us, because it had not so far to go, and advanced straight forward; we were to meet it at the entrance of the village. I do not know when the third column started, for we did not meet it till afterwards.

Everything went well till we came to a place where the road cuts through a little hill, and leads down into the village. Just as we entered the space between the two mounds, covered with corn, and began to descry the foremost houses, all at once a perfect hail of bullets descended on the head of our column with a terrible noise; from every hole in the great brick building, from every window and every loophole in the houses, from the hedges, the orchards, across the low walls of stone, the fusillade came flashing upon us like lightning. At the same time, from a field behind the great tower on the left, and higher than Ligny, from the direction of the windmills, fifteen heavy guns, posted for that purpose, opened fire with a roar compared to which the sound of the fusillade was, so to speak, nothing at all. Those who, unfortunately for them, had already passed the hollow way, fell upon one another in heaps, in the smoke. And at the moment when this happened to us, we also heard the fire of the other column opening upon our right, and the roaring of other cannons; and we did not know whether they belonged to us, or if the Prussians were firing.

Fortunately, the battalion had not yet entirely passed the hill; the bullets whistled and the cannon-balls roared through the corn-fields over our heads, ploughing up the ground, but doing us no injury. Each time

such a volley passed over us, the conscripts near me ducked their heads. I remember that Buche looked at me with great eyes. The old soldiers set their lips tight.

The column halted. Each one was thinking whether it would not be better to go down again; but this only lasted for a second. The moment the fusillade appeared to slacken, all the officers, waving their swords in the air, began to shout—

“Forward!”

And the column set off again at the double. It threw itself first into the road which leads down across the hedges, over the palisades and walls where the Prussians, from their ambush, continued to fire at us. Woe to those whom we overtook! They defended themselves like wolves, but our musket-stocks and bayonets soon stretched them in corners. A considerable number of them, veterans, with grizzled moustaches, had prepared for retreat; they retired with a firm step, turning at intervals to fire another shot, and shutting a door behind them, or crouching in a hollow. We followed them persistently; there was no prudence or pity left among us; and at last we arrived, all in disorder, at the first houses, where the fusillade was reopened upon us from the windows, the corners of the streets, and every point.

There were certainly orchards and gardens, with walls of loose stone that extended along the ridge of the hill, but they were all ruined and knocked to pieces, and the palings had been torn up, and could no longer give us shelter. The buildings before us, well barricaded, continued a rolling fire upon us. In ten minutes these Prussians would have exterminated us to the last

man. Seeing this, the column began to go back—drummers, sappers, officers, and soldiers, all pell-mell, without stopping to look round. As for me, I leaped over palisades, in places where, under other circumstances, I should never have had the conceit to think I could get across, especially with my knapsack and cartridge-box at my back; and all the others did the same; we all melted away like a crumbling wall.

When once we had got to the shelter of the hollow way, between the hills, we stopped to take breath, for we were perfectly blown. Many, even, lay down on the ground, and others leaned with their backs against the fence. The officers rated us, just as if they had not themselves followed our retreating movement; many of them cried out—"Let the cannons advance!" others wanted the ranks to be formed again; and one could hardly hear one's self amid the terrible growling of the cannonade, in which the air trembled as in a thunderstorm.

I saw Buche coming back with long strides; his bayonet was quite red with blood; he took his place beside me in silence, and reloaded his musket.

More than a hundred men of the battalion, Captain Grégoire, Lieutenant Certain, and several sergeants and corporals had been left in the orchards; the first two battalions of the column had suffered equally with ourselves.

Zebedee, with his great hooked nose quite white, perceived me from a distance, and called out—

"Joseph! no quarter!"

Masses of white smoke rolled over the hills. The whole ridge, from Ligny to Saint Amand, behind the willows, aspens, and poplars that bordered the road, was a mass of fire.

I had clambered to the level of the corn-fields, my two hands grasping the ground;—and seeing this terrible spectacle—seeing also, to the top of the ridge, near the mills, long black lines of infantry, standing ready to come down upon us, with innumerable cavalry on the wings, I came down again, thinking—

“We shall never manage that army. It fills the villages, it guards the roads, it covers the ridge as far as one can see, and has cannon everywhere; it’s unreasonable to persist in such an enterprise.”

I felt indignant with our generals, and even disgusted with them.

All this had happened in less than ten minutes. Heaven knows what had become of the other columns; all the great fusillade coming from the left, and the volleys of bullets that we heard whistling through the air, were no doubt destined for them.

I thought we had already had our good share of misfortunes, when General Gérard and the other generals named Vichery and Schoeffer came galloping up from the road below us, crying like madmen—

“Forward! Forward!”

They pointed with their sabres, and to see them one would have thought it the easiest thing in the world to go on. These are the kind of obstinate beings who drive others to destruction, because their fury spreads to everybody else.

Our guns, on the road below, at this moment opened fire upon Ligny; the roofs of the village crumbled, the walls came crashing down; and with one accord we began to run forward again, the generals in front, sword in hand, and the drummers behind us beating the charge. There were shouts of “Vive l’Empereur!”

Prussian cannon-balls struck us down by dozens, the bullets flew round us like hail, and the drums kept beating *dum! dum! dum!* We seemed to see and to hear nothing as we rushed forward through the orchards; those who fell were not regarded; and two minutes afterwards we entered the village, breaking in the doors with our musket-stocks, while the Prussians fired at us from the windows. It was an uproar a thousand times worse than that without, because cries of fury were mingled with it; we rushed into the houses with bayonet-strokes; the foes massacred each other without mercy. On all sides only one cry was heard—

“No quarter!”

The Prussians we surprised in the first houses did not ask for any. They were all old soldiers who knew the meaning of the cry—“No quarter!” They defended themselves to the death.

I remember that at the third or fourth house of a tolerably broad street which runs in front of the church, and afterwards leads to a little bridge—I remember that opposite to this house, on the right, while great bent tiles, and slates, and bricks were raining down into the street, and the fires lit up by our bombshells filled the air with smoke, and when all was roaring, whistling, and shrieking around us, Zebedec seized me by the arm with a terrible glance, and shouted—

“Come on!”

And then we rushed into the house, where the great lower room, quite dark because the windows had been barricaded with sacks of earth, was already full of soldiers. At the back one could see a very steep staircase of wood, down which blood was dripping; musket-

shots were being fired from above, and their flashes showed, from one moment to another, five or six of our men leaning wounded against the balustrades, and others passing over their bodies, charging with the bayonet to force an entrance into the loft.

It was a horrible thing to see all these men, with their bristling moustaches, their brown cheeks, and fury painted in every wrinkle of their faces, trying with all their might to get up. When I saw this, I don't know what fury seized me, so that I began shouting—

“Forward! No quarter!”

If I had had the misfortune to be near the staircase, I might have tried to mount, and have got myself cut to pieces. Luckily for me, every one had the same wish, and not one of them would have given up his place to me. It was an old soldier, all covered with wounds, who mounted amid the bayonets. On arriving at the loft he let go his gun, stretched out his arms, and clung with both hands to the balustrade; two bullets fired at him point blank could not make him let go; and behind him three or four others, who pushed each other about to get up first, threw him into the room as they bounded up the last steps.

Then there arose upstairs an uproar that cannot be described; gunshots followed each other in close succession in the narrow room, and there was such a clamour that it seemed as if the house were coming down in one great crash; and other soldiers kept rushing up! When I got up, behind Zebedee, the whole place was blocked up with dead and wounded men, the windows opposite had been broken in, the walls were all splashed with blood, there was not a Prussian left alive, and five or six of our men were leaning against pieces

of furniture, smiling and looking on with a ferocious air ; they had nearly all of them balls in their bodies, or had received bayonet-thrusts, but the joy of vengeance was stronger than the pain of their wounds. When I think of that scene, it makes my hair stand on end.

Directly Zebedee saw that the Prussians were really dead, he went down, calling to me—

“Come on ! There’s nothing more to be done here !”

And we went out. Outside, the column had already gone past the church ; thousands of muskets crackled on the bridge, sounding like a charcoal stove when it is burning up. The second column, going down the great street on the right, had united with ours ; while one of those great columns of Prussians that I had seen on the ridge behind Ligny was coming down to drive us back out of the village. There it was that we and the enemy met for the first time in masses. Two staff officers were rushing away through the street from which we came.

“Those men,” said Zebedee, “are going to look for cannon. When we have cannon here, Joseph, you shall see if they can turn us out.”

He ran on, and I followed him.

The engagement continued near the bridge. Five o’clock sounded from the old church ; we had then exterminated all the Prussians on this side of the rivulet, except those who had barricaded themselves in the great brick building on the left, shaped like a tower, and with its sides pierced with holes. Some shells had set it on fire at the top, but below the fusillade continued ; and we had to avoid that direction.

In front of the church we were in force ; we found the little square crowded with troops, who stood with shouldered arms, ready to march ; there were more in a

large street that traverses Ligny throughout its entire length. The head of one column was still engaged opposite the little bridge. The Prussians were trying to drive us back; file-firing went on incessantly, like the pattering of falling water. On the square, one could see nothing through the smoke but bayonets, the façade of the church, generals standing on the steps in front giving their orders, staff officers galloping away, and in the air the old slate-covered steeple, round which the crows were wheeling, terrified at all this uproar.

The cannon of St. Amand kept on sounding. Between the gables on the left, one could see on the ridge long blue lines, and masses of cavalry moving in the direction of Sombref, to turn our flank. Yonder, behind us, there were to be hand-to-hand combats between the uhlans and our hussars. How many of those uhlans we saw stretched on the plains next day!

Our battalion having suffered most, then passed into the second line. We found our company again directly that Captain Florentin commanded. Cannons were also coming by the same street as we; the horses galloped along, foaming and shaking their heads as if they were mad; the guns and the tumbrils crushed everything; that necessarily made a great uproar; but amid the roaring of the cannon and the rattle of the musketry one could distinguish nothing. All the soldiers were making a noise, and some of them were singing, with their arms uplifted and their guns on their shoulders; but one could only tell it by seeing their open mouths.

I had taken my place again next to Buche, and was beginning to breathe freely, when all were set in motion once more.



This time the thing to be done was to pass the rivulet, to drive the Prussians out of Ligny, to mount the ridge behind, and to cut their army in two; and then the battle would be won! Every one could understand that; but with the mass of troops they held in reserve, it was no small matter to achieve.

All marched forward to attack the bridge; no one could see anything but the five or six men before him. I was glad to hear that the column extended a long way in front.

What I liked better still was that in the middle of the street, in front of a barn whose door had been beaten in, Captain Florentin halted the company, and that the remains of the battalion were posted in these half-ruined structures, to support the attacking column by firing from the windows.

We were fifteen men in this barn, and I can fancy I see myself and the rest now, mounting by a ladder through a square hole; and I see the two or three dead Prussians down by the wall, and the old door, riddled with bullets, hanging only by one of its hinges, and at the back a loophole looking upon the other street behind. Zebedee commanded our party; Lieutenant Bretonville established himself with another detachment in the house opposite, and Captain Florentin went somewhere else.

The street was lined with troops as far as the two corners by the rivulet.

The first thing we tried to do was to set up the door again, and strengthen it; but we had hardly begun this work when a horrible noise was heard in the street; the walls, shutters, and roof all came rattling down together; and two men of our party, who had

remained outside to prop up the door, fell as if mown down with a scythe. At the same time, in the distance, near the rivulet, the footsteps of the retreating column were heard clattering over the bridge; while ten discharges similar to the first roared through the air and made one shrink back in spite of oneself. This came from six guns loaded with grapeshot, which Blucher had masked at the end of the street, and which were opening fire upon us.

The whole column, drummers, soldiers, officers, on foot and on horseback, falling over each other and pushing one another down, came rushing by like a hurricane. Nobody looked behind him; those who fell were lost men. Hardly had the last of them passed our door when Zebedee leaned out to look, and immediately cried out in a terrible voice—

“The Prussians!”

He fired his musket. Several of us were already on the ladder; but before I thought of climbing up, the Prussians were there; Zebedee, Buche, and all who had not had time to get up kept them off with their bayonets. I fancy I can still see those Prussians, with their great moustaches, their red faces, and their low shakos, furious at being stopped. I never had such a shock. Zebedee shouted, “No quarter!” as if we had been the stronger party. Directly afterwards he received a blow from the butt-end of a musket, and fell.

I saw that he was going to be massacred, and it made my heart stand still. I rushed out shouting—

“Bayonets!”

And we all ran together upon those rascals, while our comrades fired from above, and from the houses opposite a fusillade was opened upon them.

Then the Prussians gave way, but farther on a whole battalion was coming up. Buche took Zebedee on his shoulders and ran up the ladder. We had barely time to follow him, calling out to him to make haste.

We helped him to climb with all our might. I was the last but one. I thought the ladder would never end; and here was a terrible thing: when we came to draw it up, amid bullets from below that shattered the head of one of our comrades, we found it was too large to go into the loft. This made us all turn pale. Then Zebedee, who was recovering, said to us—

“Why don’t you fix a musket to the rungs?”

And this idea seemed to us an inspiration from above.

But you should have heard the uproar that was going on below. The whole street was full of Prussians, and our barn too. These people were beside themselves with rage; they were worse than we, and kept on repeating—

“No prisoners!”

Our firing made them angry; they broke in the doors, and one could hear combats in the houses, and heavy falls, and curses in French and in German, commands shouted by Lieutenant Bretonville opposite, and the Prussian officers crying out to their men to bring straw to set the places on fire. Fortunately the fields had not yet been reaped, otherwise they would have burnt us all together.

They fired into the floor of our loft; but the floor was of good oaken planks, and the balls rattled against them like blows with a hammer. We, standing behind one another, kept on firing down into the street, and ever shot told.

It seemed that these people had retaken the square before the church, for we could now only hear the noise of the fire at a distance. We were left alone, two or three hundred men, surrounded by three or four thousand.

Then I said to myself—

“It is all over with you, Joseph. You will never escape from this—it’s impossible.”

And I did not dare to think of Catharine, for my heart wept. There was no chance of retreat for us. The Prussians held the two ends of the street and the lanes behind it; they had already retaken some houses. But all was silent. They were preparing something; they were looking for hay, straw, and faggots, or else they were bringing their guns forward to annihilate us.

Our fusilier looked out of the loophole, but could see nothing, for the street was empty. This silence around was more terrible than the tumult just before.

Zebedee had got up again; the blood was pouring from his mouth and nose.

“Attention!” said he. “We shall have to receive an attack—the rascals are preparing! Load your guns!”

Scarcely had he uttered the words, when the whole house, from the roof to the foundations, was shaken as if it was all sinking into the earth; beams, laths, and slates all came tumbling down with the shock; while a red flame rose from beneath our feet to the height of the roof.

We all fell backward. A lighted bombshell, that the Prussians had rolled into the barn, had just burst.

When I got up again, there was a hissing in my ears; but, for all that, I could see a ladder raised

against our loophole, and Buche making desperate thrusts with his bayonet at something outside.

The Prussians wanted to take advantage of our surprise to rush in and massacre us; the sight turned me cold, and I ran forward to help Buche.

Those of our comrades who had not been killed also came running up, crying—

“Vive l'Empereur!”

And then, so to speak, I heard nothing more. The noise must have been horrible, for the fusillade from below, and from the windows, lit up all the street like a rolling fire. We had thrown down the ladder, and there were still six of us left—two in front, who kept firing, and four behind them, who loaded and handed them the muskets.

In this extremity I had become calm, and resigned myself to my misfortune, merely thinking—

“Try to preserve thy life!”

The others, no doubt, had the same idea, and we did great execution.

This terrible crisis lasted about a quarter of an hour, and then the cannon began to thunder again, and our comrades in front ceased firing, and leaned out of the window.

My cartridge-box was nearly empty, and I went to take more cartridges from the dead bodies.

Cries of “Vive l'Empereur!” were now heard, and they came nearer; all at once the head of our column, with its flag all black and torn, was seen advancing along the little square, and turning into our street.

The Prussians were retreating. We would have all come down, but twice or thrice our column wavered before the musketry fire that met it. The cries

and the cannonade were again intermingled. Zebedee, who was looking out, at last ran to put down the ladder; our column was passing by the barn, and we all came down, one after another, without looking at our comrades, who had been torn by the fragments of the bomb, and several of whom cried out to us in heart-rending tones to carry them with us.

But that is the character of men: the fear of being taken makes them barbarous.

Long afterwards these abominable things came back upon us. One would then give anything to have had courage and humanity; but it is too late.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Thus it was that six of us went out of the barn, into which fifteen had gone an hour before. Buche and Zebedee were both among the survivors: the Phalsbourg men had been lucky.

Once outside, we had to follow the attacking party.

We marched on over a heap of dead men; all was soft under our feet. No one looked down to see if he was stepping on the face of a wounded man, or on his chest, or his limbs; we only marched onward. The next day we learned that this mass of Prussians, crowded together in the street, had been swept away by some pieces of cannon put up as a battery in front of the church; the pertinacity of these people had caused their ruin.

Blucher was only waiting for the moment to do as much for us; but instead of passing over the bridge we were made to incline to the right and occupy the houses that border the stream. The Prussians were firing at us from all the windows opposite. When we were entrenched in the houses we opened fire upon their pieces, and this forced them to give way.

There was already a talk of our attacking the other part of the village, when the rumour spread that a column of Prussians, fifteen to twenty thousand strong, was coming from Charleroi in our rear. No one could

understand this; for we had swept the whole region from the banks of the Sambre; this column, which was falling upon our rear, must, therefore, have been concealed in the woods.

It might then be about half-past six o'clock; the combat at Saint Amand seemed to increase. Blucher was directing all his force that way; the moment was favourable for taking the other part of the village; but this column forced us to wait.

The rows of houses on each side of the rivulet were lined with troops; on the right were the French, on the left the Prussians. The firing had ceased, though scattered shots still fell, but they were far apart. The two sides were watching each other, as if they said—

“Let us take breath! Presently we shall have another tussle!”

The Prussians, in the houses opposite, with their blue coats and leather shakos, and their moustaches bent back, were old soldiers, robust men, with square chins, and with their ears stretching out from their heads. One would have thought they could overturn us at a blow.

Their officers, too, were watching us.

Along the two streets which skirted the water, and in the streamlet itself, there were long uninterrupted lines of corpses. Many were sitting with their backs against the wall; they were such as had been dangerously wounded during the fight, and having still the strength to drag themselves out of the mêlée, had propped themselves against the wall, where they had died from loss of blood. In the stream many were standing upright, with their hands grasping the margin, as if to climb out; but they never stirred; and in the dark nooks, into which the rays of the sun glinted down, one could



see poor wretches crushed under ruins, with beams and great stones resting upon their bodies.

The combat of Saint Amand became more terrible ; the successive thunders of the cannon seemed to rise one above another ; and if we had not been all face to face with death, we could not have helped admiring the magnificent uproar.

At each discharge hundreds of men had perished ; and there was no cessation, so that the very earth trembled.

We had time to breathe now ; but soon we felt a terrible thirst. While we had been fighting no one had felt this horrible thirst ; but now every one wanted to drink.

Our house was the corner one on the left of the bridge, and the little water that rolled through the mud was red with gore. But between our house and the next, in the middle of a little garden, there was a well ; and we all looked at this well with its windlass and two wooden supports. In spite of the hail of bullets, the two buckets still hung by the chain ; three men, their faces towards the ground, and their hands stretched out in front of them, were lying in the path which led to this spot ; they had also wanted to drink, and the Prussians had killed them.

So we all stood with our guns beside us, looking at the well. One said—

“ I would give half my blood for a glass of water.”

Another said—

“ Yes, but the Prussians are watching.”

It was true. The Prussians, a hundred paces from us, and perhaps as thirsty as ourselves, had guessed what we thought.

That was the cause of the shots that were still being fired; whenever any one ventured forward along the street, he was fired at directly; and thus each side made the other suffer terrible torments.

This had lasted at least half an hour, when all at once the cannonade spread between Saint Amand and Ligny, and all at once we saw that they were firing canister-shot at the Prussians, between the two villages, for at every discharge there were gaps cut in their serried columns; this new attack produced a great agitation. Buche, who until this moment had not moved, now went by the lane into the garden, and ran to the well; he stood behind the raised margin, and the two houses opposite opened fire upon him, so that the stone walls and the beams were soon riddled with balls. But we, on our side, began to fire at the windows, and in a moment the fusillade had begun again from one end of the village to the other, and the smoke floated about everywhere.

At this moment a voice from below cried out—

“Joseph! Joseph!”

It was Buche; he had had the courage to draw up the bucket, to unhook it, and to bring it back with him, after drinking. Several of the old soldiers wanted to take the bucket from him; but he called out—

“My comrade first! Let go, or I’ll spill it all!”

They were obliged to wait for me. I drank as much as I could, and then the rest followed, and those from above came down and drank till it was all gone.

In this way it was that Buche showed that he loved me. Then we went up together very well pleased.

I think it must then have been more than seven

o'clock. The sun was setting. The shadows of the houses we were in lengthened till they reached to the stream; the houses occupied by the Prussians were lit up, as well as the ridge of Bry, from which fresh troops were pouring down at the double. The cannonade had never been so heavy on our side as now.

Every one knows now that between seven and eight o'clock in the evening, as night was coming on, the Emperor found that the column of Prussians which had been reported as being on our rear was in reality the corps of General Erlon that had lost its way between the army of Ney, fighting against the English at Quatre Bras, and ours, and that he immediately ordered the Old Guard to support us.

A lieutenant, who was with us, said—

“The grand attack is coming! Attention!”

All the cavalry of the Prussians was pressing forward between the two villages. Without seeing it, we felt that there was a great movement behind us. The lieutenant repeated—

“Attention to the word of command! No man is to remain behind after the word of command has been given! Now comes the attack!”

So we were all on the alert.

The more the night came on the redder did the sky grow in the direction of Saint Amand. We had heard so much cannonading that we no longer paid attention to it, but at every discharge it looked as if the sky were catching fire.

The uproar behind us increased.

All at once the great street that skirts the streamlet was full of our troops, from the bridge to the other end of Ligny. On the left, and further off still, the Prus-

sians were firing from the windows; but we no longer answered their fire. Then rose the cry—

“The Guard! it’s the Guard!”

I do not know how all that mass of men passed the muddy stream; it must have been upon planks, for in an instant our troops were on the left bank.

The great battery of the Prussians above the ravine, between the villages, tore gaps in our columns; but these gaps closed up at once, and our men passed on.

The remains of our column ran forward to the bridge, and mounted artillerymen with their pieces followed at a gallop.

Then we went down also; but we had not yet reached the bridge when the cuirassiers began to defile; after the cuirassiers came the dragoons and the mounted grenadiers of the Guard. They were advancing everywhere, across and even beyond the village; it was like a new and innumerable army.

Above, the massacre was beginning again; this time it was a battle in the open field. Night was coming on, and the Prussian squares appeared in lines of fire on the ridge.

We ran forward striding across the dead and wounded. Once clear of the village we saw what may be called a *mêlée* of cavalry; one could see nothing, so to speak, but white cuirasses flashing through lines of uhlans; all were mingled together, and then the cuirassiers reformed, and rode off as steady as a wall.

It was already dark, and the clouds of smoke prevented one from seeing fifty paces in advance. The whole mass was moving onwards towards the mills; the clatter of the galloping, the cries, the words of command, and the distant file-firing were all mingled to-

gether. Several squares had been broken. From time to time a flash of fire showed a few horsemen—a lancer leaning forward on his horse's neck, a cuirassier, with his broad white back, his helmet, and his waving horsehair plume, rushing forward like a cannon-ball, or two or three foot-soldiers running amid the confusion, and all passed like a flash of lightning, and then the mangled corn-fields were lit up for a quarter of a second, with the rain pouring from the sky, for a storm had just burst, and we could see the wounded lying crushed under the feet of the horses.

Then we ten or twelve men, the last remains of the company, standing by the ruined houses, with our cartridge-boxes almost empty, did not know which way to turn. Zebedee, Captain Florentin, and Lieutenant Bretonville had disappeared, and Sergeant Rabot commanded us. He was an old man, withered, and small in stature, but as hard as iron. He must have had red hair when he was young. He winked his eye, and whenever I speak of him, I fancy I hear him say—

“The battle is won! Files to the right! Forward—march!”

Several asked leave to make the soup, for after a twelve hours' fast they began to feel hungry; the sergeant, with his gun on his shoulder, walked down the lane, laughing to himself, and saying in a low voice—

“The soup! the soup! Wait a little; the commissariat waggons will be here soon.”

We followed him into the dark lane; towards the middle we saw a cuirassier on horseback, with his back towards us. He had received a sabre-thrust in the body, and had taken refuge here; the horse was leaning

against the wall to prevent him from falling. As we passed by, he called to us—

“Comrades!”

Nobody even turned his head towards him. Twenty paces further on was an old building quite riddled with holes from cannon-shot, but with half the straw roof still undestroyed. Sergeant Rabot chose this as our post, and we entered the building in a row.

It was as dark as an oven. The sergeant burnt some priming, and then we saw that it was a kitchen. The hearth was on the right, the staircase was on the left, and five or six Prussians and Frenchmen stretched on the ground, as white as wax, with their eyes wide open.

“Come,” said the sergeant, “there’s our lodging; let every man make himself comfortable; our bed-fellows won’t give us any kicks.”

As we saw that we must not count on any distribution of rations, every one unbuckled his knapsack in silence, put it on the ground by the wall, and lay down with his head upon it. Firing could still be heard, but very far off, on the ridge. The rain was falling in torrents. The sergeant pulled to the creaking door, and then quietly lighted his pipe; some of the men were already smoking; I looked at him as he stood smoking by the little window, every pane of which was shattered.

He was a stern but just man. He had three stripes, and could read and write; he would have been a commissioned officer, because he had been wounded, only that his figure was against him. At last he too lay down with his head on his knapsack, and we were all asleep together.

We had been sleeping for a long time, when I was startled by a noise. Some one was hovering round the

building. I leaned on my arm to listen, and directly after I heard some one try to open the door. Then I could not repress a cry.

"What is it?" asked the sergeant.

And as the footsteps retreated at a run, he said, as he turned round on his knapsack—

"Aha—the birds of night—be off, you rascals; be off, or I will send a bullet after you."

He did not say anything more. For me, I had approached the window, and could see all along the lane plunderers searching the dead and the wounded. They walked silently from one to another. The rain was falling in torrents; it was a horrible thing.

Nevertheless, I lay down again, and was soon asleep after the great fatigue I had endured.

At break of day the sergeant was afoot, and cried—

"Let us be off!"

We went out of the building, and marched up the lane. The cuirassier was lying on the ground, and his horse stood by him, waiting.

The sergeant took the horse by the bridle, and led it a hundred paces into the orchard; then he took the bit out of its mouth, and said—

"Go and feed; they'll catch you again presently." And the poor beast walked slowly away.

We marched quickly into a footpath that ran parallel to Ligny; ploughed fields and some squares of garden ground bordered this path. The sergeant looked round as we passed by; he stooped down to dig up some remains of carrots and turnips. I made haste to imitate his example, while our comrades hurried on, without turning their heads.

Then I saw what a good thing it was to know the

fruits of the earth ; for I found two fine turnips and some carrots, which are very good raw ; and I followed the example of the sergeant, and put them into my shako.

Then I ran on to overtake the rest, who were hastening towards the fires of Sombref.

As for the rest, I cannot attempt to depict to you the plain behind Ligny, where our cuirassiers and dragoons had hewn down everything before them. All around were heaps of men and horses, the men entangled below, dead or wounded. Some of them lifted up their hands to make signs to us ; and the horses tried to get up, and crushed the poor wretches more than ever, as they fell back again.

Blood—nothing but blood ! The track of the cannon-balls and of the canister-shot was marked in red lines on the ridges, as in our country the passage of the torrents is marked in the sand, at the melting of the snows. Well, do you wish me to tell the truth ? The fact is, that the sight hardly affected me at all.

Before I went to Lutzen, such a spectacle would have made me fall back fainting, I should have thought.

Do our masters look upon men as if they were animals ? Did the good God intend us to be prey for wolves ? Have we mothers, sisters, friends, beings who love us, on earth, and will they not cry to Heaven for vengeance ?

The strongest are always in the right. The Emperor is the strongest, and beckons to us to come ; and in spite of everything we must come from Phalsbourg, Saverne, and other places, and take our ranks, and march. Whoever showed any signs of refusing would be at once shot. The marshals, generals, officers, sub-officers, and soldiers, from the first to the last, have to obey the



word of command; they dare not take a step without orders; and the other people obey the army. It is the Emperor who wills everything, who can do everything, and who settles everything. Well, and would not Joseph Bertha be a fool if he thought that the Emperor could, for once in his life, be in the wrong? Is this not contrary to common sense?

That is what we all thought; and if the Emperor had kept his place, all France would have had the same idea to the present day.

I was only glad of one thing—namely, that I had my carrots and turnips; for when we passed behind the bivouacs to ask where our battalion was, we learned that no distribution of provisions had taken place; they had received only a ration of brandy and some cartridges.

The old soldiers had gone out foraging for something to fill the soup-kettles. The conscripts, who did not yet know how to manage during a campaign, and who had already eaten their bread, as will frequently happen when one is twenty years old and has a good appetite—these were obliged to make up their minds to go without wetting their spoons.

Towards seven o'clock we at last reached our bivouac. Zebedee seemed very glad to see me. He came out to meet me, and said—

“I am very glad to see you, Joseph; but what do you bring? We've found a very fat kid, and we've some salt, too, but not a morsel of bread.”

I showed him the rice I had left, and my carrots and turnips. He said to me—

“That's fine; we shall have the best stew of all the battalion.”

I wanted Buche to eat with us too; and the six men of our mess who had all had the luck to escape with a few gunstock blows and scratches, consented. The drum-major Padoue said, laughing—

“Old soldiers are always old soldiers; they never come with empty hands.”

We glanced aside at the kettle of five conscripts, which was boiling near us; and seeing only rice in it, we winked at each other; for we had a good strong soup, which sent forth its savoury smell far around.

At eight o'clock we breakfasted, with what appetite may well be imagined. Not even on my wedding-day had I made a better meal; and it's a satisfaction to me still when I think of it. When age comes one has no longer the enthusiasm of youth for such things; but they are always agreeable recollections. And this good meal sustained us for a long time; the poor conscripts, with their remnant of bread worked into a paste by the rain, were to see hard times next day, the 18th. We were destined to have a very short and a very terrible campaign. Well, all that is past now; but one does not think without emotion of these great hardships, and thanks God that one has survived them.

The weather seemed to be clearing up, the sun was beginning to shine again through the clouds. We had hardly finished eating when the rappel was beaten all along the line.

You must know that at this time the Prussians were only in the act of withdrawing their rear-guard from Sombref, and that it was a question of going in pursuit of them; many even said that this ought to be done before anything else, and that our light cavalry ought to be sent far forward to bring in prisoners. But nobody

listened to them, for the Emperor must know very well what he was about.

I remember, however, that everybody was astonished, because it is usual to take advantage of victories. The old soldiers had never seen a proceeding like this. It was supposed that the Emperor meditated a grand stroke, or that he had sent Ney to turn the enemy's flank, or something of that kind.

Meanwhile the roll-call began, and General Gérard came to review the fourth corps. Our battalion had suffered most, because of the three attacks in which we had always been in the front. We had Commandant Géméau and Captain Vidal wounded; Captains Grégoire and Vignot killed; seven lieutenants and sub-lieutenants and three hundred and sixty men killed, wounded, or missing.

Zebedee said that this was worse than at Montmirail, and that we certainly should be reinforced before we set out.

Fortunately the fourth battalion, under Commandant Delong, arrived from Metz and took our place in the line.

Captain Florentin, who commanded us, cried—

“Files to the left!” and we went down to the village till we came near the church, where a number of carts were standing.

We were told off in detachments to superintend the removal of the wounded. Some companies of chasseurs were ordered to escort the convoys as far as Fleurus, because there was no room for them at Ligny; the church was already full of these poor creatures.

It was not we who picked out the wounded, but the military surgeons, and some local medical men who had

been pressed into the service; it was too difficult to recognise a great number of these wounded men among the dead. We had only to help place them on straw pallets in the carts.

I was used to this business from the Lutzen days. I knew what a man has to suffer before he is cured of a bullet-wound, a sabre-stroke, or a thrust such as our cuirassiers can give. Each time I saw one of these poor wretches carried off, I praised the Lord that I was not reduced to that condition; and when I thought that the same thing might have happened to me, I said to myself—"You don't know how many balls and fragments of shell have passed close by you; if you did, the idea would make you tremble."

I was astonished that so many of us had escaped this carnage, which was much worse than at Lutzen, or even at Leipsic; for the battle had only lasted five hours, and in many places the corpses lay in piles two or three feet high. The blood flowed out beneath these piles in rivulets. All the main street through which the cannonade passed was covered with red mud—with mud formed of crushed flesh and bones!

I am obliged to tell this, that the young people may know the truth. For me, I shall not go out to battle any more—I am past the age, thank God! But all these young people, who think of nothing but war, instead of wanting to work honestly and help their old parents, ought to hear how men are treated. Let them think what must be the reflections of those unhappy wretches who have not done their duty, as they lie in a street or on the highway with a limb shot off, and hear the heavy cannons that weigh tons come rolling up, with the well-shod horses in front prancing and neighing

That's the hour when they will be sure to think of the poor old people who stretched out their arms after them in front of the little cottage in the village, when they turned and went away, saying—

“I am going, and I shall return with a pair of epaulettes!”

Yes, yes; if they could weep and ask pardon of God, those poor fellows, one would see their tears and hear their cries. But it's too late then. The cannon and the ammunition waggons, full of cannon-balls and shells, come thundering on; they can hear the bones cracking as the train comes rushing up; and over their bodies goes the whole thing, as if they were so much mud!

When one is old, and has children whom one loves, it is a horrible thing to think that misfortunes like these might happen to them. One would give one's last shirt to save them from having to go.

But it's all of no use. Bad hearts are incorrigible, and good hearts do their duty. If misfortunes happen to these latter, at least they have their confidence in God's goodness to console them. They don't want to kill their fellow-creatures for the sake of glory; they go because they are compelled; they have nothing to reproach themselves with; they are defending their own lives, and the blood that is shed will not lie on them.

Well, I must make an end of telling you about this battle, and the transport of the wounded.

On this occasion I saw sights that one would hardly credit—men killed in the moment of their greatest fury, whose horrible faces had not changed. They still clutched their muskets and stood erect, propped up against

walls; and to look at them you might fancy you could hear them cry—

“Forward, bayonets! No quarter!”

With this thought and with this cry they had been summoned in a moment before God, who awaited them. Might He not say to each of them—

“I am here! Thou wouldst kill thy brother? Thou wilt have no quarter? Thou shalt have none!”

I have seen others, men half-dead, strangling each other. And you must know that at Fleurus they were obliged to separate the wounded French from the wounded Prussians, because men used to get up from their beds or their trusses of straw to tear and destroy one another.

Alas for war! Those who wish for war and make men do the deeds of savage beasts will have a heavy account to settle hereafter!

## CHAPTER XX.

THE removal of the wounded went on till evening. But towards noon cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" were heard extending all along our line of bivouacs, from the village of Bry as far as Sombref. Napoleon had left Fleurens with his staff; he was reviewing the army on the plateau. The cries continued for about an hour, and then all was silent; the army must have been on the march.

For a long time we stood waiting for an order to follow. As this order did not come, Captain Florentin at last went to see what was going on, and came galloping back, crying out—

"Beat the rappel."

The detachments of the battalion assembled quickly, and we went up the village at the quick step. All were in motion. Many other regiments had not got their orders, and in the direction of Saint Amand all the streets were full of soldiers. Some companies who had remained behind cut across the fields, and gained the road on the left, where could be seen a column extending as far as the eye could reach, with carts and ammunition-waggons and baggage of all kinds.

I've often thought that we should have been lucky that day if we had been left behind, like Gérard's division at Saint Amand, for no one could have reproached

us. As we had received orders to attend to the wounded, we were in our duty; but Captain Florentin would have thought himself dishonoured.

So we marched forward in all haste. It had begun to rain again. We slipped about in the mud, and night was coming on. I had never seen more abominable weather, not even in Germany, during the retreat from Leipsic; the rain fell as if from a watering-pot, and we plodded on with curved backs, each man with his musket under his arm, and the skirt of his great-coat over the lock, so wet through that had we been crossing a river we could hardly have been in a worse plight. And how muddy it was! And then we began to feel the pangs of hunger. Buche repeated to me from time to time—

“After all, the sight of a dozen potatoes baked in the ashes as at Harberg would be a sight to rejoice at. We don’t get meat every day at my place, but we have potatoes.”

For my part, I could fancy I saw our little room at Phalsbourg, warm and snug, with the white tablecloth laid; Father Goulden sitting with his plate before him, and Catharine serving up the good hot soup, while the cutlets smoked on the hearth. The sadness of my position overwhelmed me; and if wishing for death to deliver me from all my woes had been sufficient to make me die, I should have been out of this world a long time ago.

The night had come. The sky was quite grey. In the paths where one got into the mud up to the knees it was difficult to find the way; but one had only to go tramping straight on through the mud, and one could not well go wrong.



Between seven and eight o'clock we heard something in the distance like the rolling of thunder. Some of our people said, "It's a storm!" Others said, "It's the cannon!"

A number of stragglers were following us. At eight o'clock we arrived at Quatre-Bras. Its two houses, standing opposite each other at the point where the road from Nivelles to Namur crosses that from Brussels to Charleroi, these houses were crowded with wounded men. Here it was that Marshal Ney had given battle to the English to prevent them from going to the assistance of the Prussians, by the road along which we had just come. We had only twenty thousand men against forty thousand, and yet Nicholas Cloutier, the tanner, maintains to this day that he ought to have detached half his force to attack the Prussians in the rear, as if he had not quite enough to do to stop the others. But to hear men like that talk, you would think everything was easy; whereas if they had to command, they'd be put to rout by four men and a corporal.

Below, in the fields of barley and oats, lay a great number of corpses; and it was there that I saw the first red-coats lying on the plain.

The captain ordered us to halt; he went alone into the house on the right. We had been waiting for some time in the rain, when he came out of the door with the general of Donzelot's division, who was laughing, because we ought to have followed Grouchy's army in the direction of Namur, and that the want of orders had made us turn towards Quatre-Bras. But we were now commanded to continue our march without stopping.

I thought every minute I must fall down from exhaustion; but matters became worse when we had

overtaken the baggage, for we had now to march by the side of the road, in the fields, and the more we advanced the deeper we got into the mud, in that fat soil.

Towards eleven o'clock we reached a large village called Genappe, which extends along both sides of the road. The block occasioned by waggons, tumbrils, cannon, and baggage compelled us to pass the Thy on the right by a bridge, and from this point we marched entirely in the fields, through the corn crops and the growing hemp, like so many savages who respect nothing. The night was so dark that the mounted dragoons, placed like signposts at every two hundred paces, called out to us—

“This way! this way!”

At midnight we came to an angle in a road, near a kind of farm, thatched with straw; it was full of officers of rank. It was not far from the high road, for we could hear the cavalry, the artillery, and carriages of all kinds rolling along, with a murmuring like a torrent.

Scarcely had the captain entered the farm when several of us rushed into the garden, forcing our way through the hedges. I did as the others did, and pulled a handful of roots. Nearly the whole battalion followed our example, in spite of the shouts of the officers; every one dug up what he could with his bayonet, and in a couple of minutes there was not a root left in the ground. The sergeants and corporals had come across with us; and when the captain came back we had already got into our ranks.

Those who rob and pillage during a campaign deserve to be shot; but what would you have? In the villages

through which we passed there was not a fourth part of the food requisite for such a number of men. The English had already cleared them of almost everything. We certainly had a little rice left, but in rice without meat there is not much nourishment. The English received beef and mutton from Brussels; they were well fed, and shone with health. But we had come on too quickly, and our convoys of provisions were behind time; and next day, on which the terrible battle of Waterloo was to be fought, we received nothing but a ration of brandy.

At last, moving on from there, we mounted a little ridge, and in spite of the rain, we could see the bivouacs of the English. We were made to take up our position in a corn-field, among several regiments which we could not see, because we had received orders to light no fires, for fear we should startle the enemy, if he saw us posted in line, and make him continue his retreat.

Now fancy to yourself men lying among the corn-stalks, under a beating rain, like real Bohemians, their teeth chattering with cold, thinking of massacring their fellow-men, and esteeming themselves lucky if they had a turnip, a carrot, or anything else to keep up their strength a little. Is that a life for honest fellows? Is it for this that God created us, and sent us into the world? Is it not an abomination to think that a king, or an emperor, instead of looking after the affairs of his country, encouraging commerce, diffusing instruction, liberty, and good example, should reduce us to this state, by hundreds of thousands? I know that this is what is called glory; but people are very foolish to glorify such men; to do it one must have lost all common sense, and heart, and religion.

But all these reflections did not prevent our teeth from chattering as we saw the English opposite to us, warming themselves and eating their fill around their great fires, after receiving their rations of beef, brandy, and tobacco. I thought—

“Now we poor devils, drenched to the marrow of our bones, shall be forced to attack these men, who are full of confidence in their strength, and want neither for cannon, or ammunition, or anything else; who can sleep with their feet to the fire, and their stomachs well filled, while we’re lying in the mud.”

All night long I felt angry at this sight. Buche said to me—

“I don’t mind the rain, for I’ve had to bear that often enough; but, at any rate, I used to have a crust of bread, onions, and salt.”

He was getting angry. For my part, I felt mournful about my fate, and said nothing.

Between two and three o’clock in the morning the rain left off. Buche and I sat back to back on a furrow, to warm ourselves, and at last I fell asleep from sheer weariness.

One thing that I shall never forget is the feeling when I woke up at about five o’clock in the morning; the bells of the villages were sounding for matins across the great plain; and, looking at the trampled corn, and my comrades lying about right and left, and the grey sky overhead, the great desolation made my heart tremble. The sound of bells that came from Planchenoit, Genappe, Frichemont, and Waterloo, reminded me of Phalsbourg; and I said to myself—

“To-day is Sunday, a day of peace and rest. Mons. Goulden, yesterday, must have hung his best coat over

the chair, and a clean shirt. Now he's getting up, and thinking of me. Catharine, also, is getting up in our little room; she sits down on the bed and weeps; and Aunt Grethel, at Quatre-Vents, is opening her shutters, and has taken her prayer-book out of her wardrobe, to go to mass."

And I could fancy I heard the bells of Dann, of Mittelbronn, and of Bigelberg sounding in the silence. I pictured to myself that happy, quiet life, and I could have burst into tears. But the drums began to beat, sounding dull and muffled in the wet weather, with a sinister sound. Beside the highway, on the left, they were beating the assembly, and the cavalry trumpets sounded the *réveillée*. Men were getting up and looking across the corn. These three days of marching and fighting, of bad weather and want of rations, had made the men gloomy. They no longer talked as they did at Ligny; every one looked out and reflected on his own account.

We could also see that it would be a very great battle, because instead of having villages well occupied in our first line, which would cause many separate combats, we had here a great raised plateau, bare, and occupied by the English; behind their lines, at the top of the ridge, was the village of Mont Saint Jean; and much farther off, nearly a league and a half away, a great forest that stood up against the sky.

Between the English and ourselves the ground sloped gently downwards, and rose again in our direction; but it required one to be accustomed to campaigning to see this little valley, which became deeper towards the right, and narrowed into the form of a ravine. On the slope of this ravine, on our side, behind the hedges,

some poplars and other trees, and some houses covered with thatch, indicated a hamlet; it was Planchenoit. In the same direction, but much higher up, and behind the enemy's left, a plain extended as far as one could see, dotted with little villages.

In rainy weather, after a storm, these things are seen more plainly; for everything appears a dark blue on a clear ground. One could even distinguish the little village of Saint Lambert, at three leagues from us on the right.

On our left, and behind the right of the English, were some other little villages, whose names I have forgotten.

This is what we could see, at the first glance, in the wide country, full of magnificent harvest-fields, with the crops still in flower; and each one asked himself why the English were here, and what advantage they had in defending this position. Then we observed their line more closely in front of us, and we saw that the great road along which we had marched from Quatre-Bras, which leads to Brussels, a broad and well-kept road which was even paved in the middle, traversed the enemy's position about the centre; it was straight, and we could follow it with our eyes as far as the village of Mont Saint Jean, and even farther still, to the entrance of the great forest of Soignies. The English evidently were going to defend it to prevent us from getting to Brussels.

Looking closely, we could see that their line of battle curved a little towards us on both wings, and followed a hollow way which cut the road to Brussels at right angles. This way was entirely hollow on the left of the road; on the right it was bordered by great hedges of

holly, and by small beeches, such as are frequently found in this country. Behind it were posted masses of red-coats, who were watching us from their covered way; the front of their ridge descended in a slope like a glacis; it was very dangerous to look at.

And on their wings, which spread out to about three-quarters of a league, were innumerable cavalry. We could also see cavalry above, in the plateau, in the place where the main road, after passing the hill, descends before rising again towards Mont Saint Jean; for it was very well understood that there was a hollow between the position of the English and that village;—not very deep, for the plumes of the cavalry could be seen, but yet so deep that great reserve forces could be kept there, sheltered from our balls.

I had seen Weissenfels, Lutzen, Leipsic, and Ligny; I began to understand what these things meant, why men are posted in one way rather than in another; and considered that these English had posted themselves very skilfully on this crossway to defend the main road, and that their keeping their reserves completely sheltered in the hollow showed that these people had great good sense.

For all that, three things seemed to be in our favour. These English, with their covered way and their concealed reserves, were like in a great fortification. But everybody knows that in time of war one immediately demolishes around strong places all buildings too near the ramparts, to prevent the enemy from taking possession of them, and sheltering himself behind them. Well, just before their centre, along the high road and on the slope of the glacis, was a farm something like La Roulette at Quatre-Vents, but five or six times as large.

I could see it very well from the height on which we were. It formed a great square. The outbuildings, the house, the stables, and the barn formed a triangle in the direction of the English, and the other part was like a triangle formed by a wall and sheds, towards us ; there was a court in the interior. One part of this wall led to the fields through a little door, and the other to the road, by a gateway for carriages. The wall was built very strongly of brick. Of course the English had posted troops there, as in a kind of half-moon ; but if we had the luck to carry it, we should be quite close to their centre, and could hurl our attacking columns against them, without keeping them long under their fire.

That was the best chance in our favour. This farm was called La Haye Sainte, as we afterwards heard.

Further off, in front of their right wing, in a hollow, was another farm, with a little wood which we might also try to take. This farm could not be seen from where I stood, but it was no doubt much stronger than La Haye Sainte, as it was covered by an orchard surrounded by walls, and by a wood further off. The fire from the windows would command the orchard, the fire from the orchard would command the wood, and the fire from the wood would sweep the ridge, while the enemy might retreat from each in turn.

These things I did not see with my own eyes ; but some old soldiers afterwards told me about the attack on this farm, which was called Hougoumont.

One ought to explain everything in describing a battle like this ; but the things a man has seen himself are the chief thing ; he can say, "I have seen these things,



As for the others, I only heard them from honest people who would not lie or deceive me."

Lastly, in front of their left wing, where the Wavre road comes down, a hundred paces from our ridge, were the farms of Papelotte and La Haye, occupied by the Germans, and the little villages of Smohain, Cheval de Bois, and Jean Loo, which I visited afterwards, so that I could account to myself for all that happened. These villages I saw plainly then; but I did not notice them particularly, more especially as they were beyond our line of battle, on the right, and that no troops were remarked there.

So now everybody can form an idea of the position of the English in front of us, of the great road to Brussels that traversed their position, the cross-road that covered it, the plateau behind, where the reserves were posted, and the three piles of building, Hougomont, La Haye Sainte, and Papelotte, in front, strongly defended. Every one must acknowledge that it would be very difficult to take them.

I looked at that at six o'clock in the morning, very attentively, as a man might do who risks losing his life or having his bones broken in an enterprise, and who wishes at least to know if he has any chance of getting off.

Zebedee, Sergeant Rabot, Captain Florentin, Buche, everybody, in fact, on rising, threw a glance in that direction, without saying anything. Then each looked round at the great squares of infantry, the squadrons of cuirassiers, dragoons, and chasseurs, lancers, and others, encamped among the standing crops.

After that, nobody feared that the English would retreat; we lighted fires as much as we wished, and the

smoke of the wet straw mounted up into the air. Those who had still a little rice left hung up their kettles; and those who had none looked on, and thought—

“Every one has his day. Yesterday we had meat, and laughed at the idea of rice; to-day we should be glad to have some.”

Towards eight o'clock some ammunition waggons came up, laden with cartridges, and some carts with barrels of brandy. Every soldier received a double ration; one might have been content with this and a crust of bread; but there was no bread to be had. You may judge from that what condition we were in. That's all we got that day; for immediately afterwards great manœuvres began. The regiments formed their brigades, and the brigades their divisions, and the divisions were formed into army corps. Officers on horseback galloped to and fro with orders, and everything was in motion. Our battalion joined Donzelot's division; the other divisions had only eight battalions each, but ours had nine.

I have often heard our old soldiers repeat the order of battle arranged by the Emperor. Reille's corps was on the left of the road, opposite Hougomont; Erlon's on the right, opposite La Haye Sainte; Ney, on horseback, on the high road, and Napoleon behind, with the Old Guard, the orderly squadrons, the lancers, chasseurs, &c. That is all I understood; for when they began to talk of the movement of the eleven columns, and of the distances, and began naming the generals one after another, I seem to be hearing of things that I have not seen. I would, therefore, rather tell you simply what I remember myself. Therefore, first, at half-past eight

o'clock, our four divisions were ordered to move forward, on the right of the highway. We were about eighteen to twenty thousand men, and marched in two lines, carrying our guns as we liked, and sinking up to the knees in the soft ground. Nobody spoke a word.

Many people tell that we were in high spirits, and sang; but that is false! When men have been marching all night without receiving any rations, when they have slept with their feet in the water, and have been forbidden to light fires, and are going to receive an enemy's fire, it takes away their inclination to sing. We were glad to drag our shoes out of the holes into which we sank at every step; the wet soon cooled our legs, and the bravest and most hardened had a weary air.

The bands certainly played the regimental marches, and the cavalry trumpets, the drums of the infantry, the big drums and trombones, all mingled together, made a terrible effect, as they always do. It is true, also, that there could not be a more martial sight than that presented by all these thousands of men marching swiftly along in good order, knapsack on back, and gun on shoulder; the white lines of cuirassiers who followed the red, brown, and yellow lines of dragoons, hussars, and lancers, whose little swallow-tailed pennons filled the air; the cannoneers in the space between the brigades, on horseback round their guns, which sank into the earth almost to the naves of the wheels; all this went through the crops, not a blade of which but was trodden flat.

And face to face with us were the English, in good order, their artillerymen with lighted matches in their hands, a spectacle that made you think of many things.

Nor did it rejoice our sight, as many have asserted ; for people who are fond of cannon-shot are very rarely found.

Father Goulden had told me that, in his time, the soldiers used to sing ; but that was because they had turned out voluntarily, and had not been forced to go. They fought to defend their fields, and to maintain the rights of man, which they loved more than the eyes in their head, and it was a very different thing from being killed to settle whether we were to have the old nobles or new ones. For my part, I never heard any singing either at Leipsic or at Waterloo.

We marched on, and the music played by order ; and when it ceased there was a great silence. Then we were at the head of a little valley, at a thousand or twelve hundred paces from the left of the English. We formed the centre of our army ; chasseurs and lancers were posted on the right flank.

The distances were taken, the ranks were closed up, and the first brigade of the first division made an oblique movement on the left, and took up a position across the high road. Our battalion formed part of the second division ; thus we were in the front line, with a single brigade of the first before us. All the cannon were ordered to the front ; the pieces of the English could be seen opposite at the same level. And for a long time other divisions kept coming up to support us. It seemed as if the whole world were marching. The old soldiers said—

“Here are Milhaud’s cuirassiers ! Here are the chasseurs of Lefebvre-Desnoëttes ! Yonder is Lobau’s corps !”

On all sides, as far as the eye could reach, nothing

was to be seen but cuirasses, helmets, busbies, sabres, lances, and rows of bayonets.

"What a battle!" cried Buche. "Woe to the English!"

And I thought as he did—I thought that not a single Englishman would escape. We may truly be said to have had bad luck on that day. But for the Prussians, I think we should have exterminated them all.

During the two hours we stood with our guns by our sides we had not even time to see half our regiments and squadrons; new ones kept coming up. I remember that after an hour there rose on the left on a sudden a tempest of shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" and that these cries approached, and grew louder and louder; that we all stood on tiptoe, and stretched our necks; that the excitement spread through the ranks; that behind us the very horses neighed as if they wanted to cry out too, and that suddenly a cloud of general officers swept by us at a gallop. Napoleon was among them. I think I saw him, but I am not sure of it; he rode so fast, and so many men lifted their shakos on the points of their bayonets, that one had hardly time to recognise his round back and grey overcoat amid the embroidered uniforms. The captain had just time to cry—"Carry arms! Present arms!" and it was over.

That's the way one almost always saw him, unless one belonged to the Guard.

When he had passed, and the cries had been taken up on the right, growing more and more distant, the idea seized everybody that in twenty minutes the battle would begin. But we were kept waiting much longer

than that. We began to be impatient; the conscripts of Erlon, who had not had our work to do the day before, began crying out, "Forward!" when at last, towards noon, the cannon began booming on the left, and a second afterwards the battalions opened fire, and then file-firing began. We could see nothing of it; it was on the other side of the way, the attack on Hougoumont.

Immediately fresh cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" were raised. The cannoneers of our four divisions were standing by their pieces, twenty paces apart, all along the ridge. At the sound of the first cannon they began to load. I can see them now, standing in line putting in the charge, ramming all together, then standing up and scraping the match on their arm; they seemed to move all together, and it turned you cold to look at them. The captains of the guns stood behind; nearly all of them were old officers, and gave the command as if they were on parade; and when the eighty pieces went off all together, nothing else could be heard, and the whole valley was covered with smoke.

After a second or two the calm clear voices of the old officers could be heard, through the humming in one's ears, giving the word of command again—

"Load—ram home—aim—fire!"

And this went on without interruption for half an hour. We could no longer see each other; but on the other side the English had also opened fire; the rushing of their cannon-balls in the air, the dull thud with which they struck the ground, and that other noise in the ranks, when muskets were shattered to pieces, and men were hurled twenty paces to the rear, with every bone smashed, like sacks, or when they sank down with

a leg or an arm gone, that noise mingled with the deep thunder; the massacre was beginning.

Some cries of the wounded mingled in this great uproar. We could also hear horses neighing with a piercing sound; it is a terrible cry, for these animals are naturally ferocious; they seem to feel a certain joy in carnage, and are hardly to be restrained. Behind us, more than half a league off, this tumult could be heard; the horses wanted to start.

For a long time we had not been able to see anything but the shadows of our cannoneers moving about in the smoke at the end of the ravine, when the order came to cease firing. And then we heard the piercing voice of the colonels of our four divisions crying—

“Form the ranks in order of battle!”

All the lines drew closer together.

“Now our turn is coming,” I said to Buche.

“Yes,” he answered, “let us keep together.”

The smoke of our pieces then rose up, and we saw the English, who continued their fire all along the hedges that bordered their road. The first brigade of Alix’s division advanced along the road to La Haye Sainte. They advanced at the quick step. I recognised behind them Marshal Ney and a few staff officers.

All the windows of the farmhouse, the garden, and the walls where holes had been pierced, all was on fire; at every step some men were left behind lying on the road. Ney on horseback, in his great cocked hat, was watching the action in the middle of the causeway. I said to Buche—

“There’s Marshal Ney; the second brigade is going to support the first, and we shall come afterwards.”

But I was mistaken; even at that moment the first battalion of the second brigade received orders to march in line, on the right-hand side of the road, the second battalion behind the first, the third behind the second, at last the fourth as in defiling order.

There was no time to form us in columns of attack, but we made a strong mass all the same; we were massed behind each other, and between 150 and 200 men in front; the captains between the companies, the commandants between the battalions. Only the balls, instead of carrying off two men at a time, carried off eight; those behind could not fire, because the front ranks were in the way, and one saw, too, presently that we could not form square. It would have been as well to have thought of this beforehand; but the eager desire to break the English ranks and win the battle at once was too strong for us.

Our division was made to march in the same manner; in proportion as the first battalion advanced, the second "closed up," and so on. As the left were to begin, I saw with pleasure that we should be in the twenty-fifth rank, and that there must be a terrible slaughter before the enemy could reach us. The two divisions on our right formed equally in massive columns, the columns being at three hundred paces from each other.

It was thus that we descended into the valley, notwithstanding the fire of the English. The heavy ground in which we kept sinking retarded our march, we shouted all together—

"Charge with the bayonet!"

On ascending we received a shower of balls over the causeway to the left. But for the tufts of bushes



on our way I think that frightful fusillade would have stopped us. The drums beat to the charge, the officers shouted—

“Left, incline!”

But this terrible fire made us involuntarily step out further with the right leg than with the left; so that when we came near the road that was bordered with hedges, we had lost our distances, and our division formed, so to speak, a great square with the third.

Then two batteries began to sweep us down. The grapeshot that came from among the hedges, a hundred paces off, pierced us through and through. There was a general cry of horror, and we rushed forward at the batteries, overturning the red-coats who tried to stop us.

Then, for the first time, I had a near view of the English, who are stout fellows, with fair skins, and clean shaven, like respectable citizens. They can fight well, but we are as good as they! It's not the fault of us poor soldiers that they beat us, for every one knows that we showed as much courage as they, and more.

It has been asserted that we were not the soldiers of Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, and the Moskwa. That's true enough; but if those were so good, they ought to have been better husbanded; we should have been glad enough to see them in our places.

All the shots of the English told; and this forced us to break our ranks. Men are not palisades; and when they are shot down they must defend themselves.

A great number had thus detached themselves, when thousands of English rose up from the midst of the corn-crops and fired point blank at them, which produced a great carnage. Every moment new files came to the

assistance of their comrades, and we should at last have spread out like an anthill on the ridge, if the cry had not been raised—

“Attention! Receive cavalry!”

And almost immediately we saw a mass of red dragoons on grey horses sweeping along like the wind; all our men who had straggled were sabred without mercy.

It must not be supposed that these dragoons fell upon our columns to break them, for they were too great and massive for that; they came down between our divisions, sabring right and left, and pushing their horses against the flanks of columns to cut them in two, but in this they could not succeed; nevertheless, they killed a great many people, and threw us into great disorder.

This was one of the most terrible moments of my life. As an old soldier I was on the right of the battalion; I had seen from afar what these people intended to do; they passed by, stretching as far forward as they could over their horses' necks to mow down our ranks; their strokes came down like lightning, and more than twenty times I thought my head was off my shoulders. Fortunately for me Sergeant Rabot was next me, and he it was who received the horrible deluge of blows, defending himself to the death, and crying at each stroke—

“Cowards! cowards!”

His blood fell upon me like rain. At last he sank down. I had still my gun loaded, and seeing one of the dragoons marking me from afar, and leaning forward to make a thrust at me, I shot him down point blank. That's the only man I saw fall before my gun.

The worst was that at the same moment their infantry, who had been rallied, began to fire upon us, and

were even bold enough to attack us with the bayonet. The first two lines were the only ones who could defend themselves. It was an abominable thing to have arranged us in this fashion.

Then the red dragoons came down into the valley pell-mell with us.

Our division had defended itself best, for we had saved our colours, while the others beside us had lost two eagles.

Thus we came floundering down through the mud, among the cannon that had been sent to support us, and whose teams had been sabred by the dragoons. We were running in every direction, Buche and I still keeping together, and it was not till ten minutes afterwards that they managed to rally us in groups from all the regiments.

Those who wish to take upon themselves to command in war ought always to keep such examples as this before their eyes, and to consider well before trying new devices. These devices cost those dear who have to carry them out.

We looked behind us as we paused to take breath, and we saw the red dragoons already riding up the ridge to carry our great battery of eight pieces; but, thank Heaven! their turn had come to be massacred. The Emperor had seen our retreat from afar, and as these dragoons rode up, two regiments of cuirassiers on the right, with a regiment of lancers on the left, fell on them in flank like thunder. Before one had time to look they were upon them. We could hear the blows ringing on the cuirasses, and the horses neighing; we could see the lances rising and falling a hundred paces off, and great sabres stretched out, the men leaning for-

ward to thrust from beneath, and the enraged horses rearing up and biting and neighing in a terrible manner, and the men lying on the ground beneath the horses' feet, trying to rise, and guarding their heads with their hands.

What a terrible thing is a battle! Buche cried—  
"Courage!" And as for me, I felt the sweat running from my forehead. Others, who had contusions, and whose eyes were full of blood, wiped their faces with a ferocious laugh.

Within ten minutes seven hundred dragoons were disabled; their grey horses were running in every direction, with their bits between their teeth. Some hundreds of the dragoons rode back into their batteries, but more than one swayed to and fro in the saddle, clinging to the mane of his horse. They had seen that it's not everything to fall upon people, and that those who attack may receive a check they don't expect.

Of all this horrible spectacle the incident that remained most plainly in my mind is that our cuirassiers, as they came riding back, with their long sabres red to the hilt, were laughing among themselves, and that a big captain with great brown moustache winked his eye in a comic way as he rode past us, as if to say to us—

"Well, you saw it—we sent them back in a hurry."

Yes, but three thousand of our men lay stretched in the valley; and it was not over, for the companies, battalions, and brigades were rallying; in the direction of La Haye Sainte the fusillade was kept up; and further off, near Hougoumont, the cannon was roaring; all this was only a little beginning, and the officers were saying—

"We have it to do over again."

One would have thought that the lives of men were of no value.

Well, it was requisite to take La Haye Sainte—it was requisite at any price to force the passage of the great main road in the enemy's centre, as the gate of a fortress is forced, in spite of their fire from the advanced posts and the demi-lunes. We had been repulsed the first time, but the battle had begun, and there was no drawing back.

After the charge of the cuirassiers, we required time to reform. At Hougoumont the battle continued; the cannon was beginning again on our right; two batteries had been brought up to clear the road behind La Haye Sainte, where the road goes into the ridge. Every one saw that the attack would be in that direction.

We were marching with shouldered arms, when, towards three o'clock, Buche, looking back on the road, said to me—

“Here's the Emperor coming!”

And other men in the ranks repeated — “Here comes the Emperor!”

The smoke was so thick that one could hardly descry, on the little height of Rossomme, the lofty bearskins of the Old Guard. I had also turned round to look at the Emperor; but soon we recognised Marshal Ney, with five or six staff officers; they came from headquarters, and were making towards us at a gallop, across country. We were standing with our backs towards him. Our commanders went out to meet him, and we could hear them talking together, but could distinguish nothing of what they said, because of the noise that filled our ears.

The marshal immediately rode to the front of our

two battalions and drew his sword. I had not seen him so close since the great review at Aschaffenburg; he looked older, thinner, and more bony, but he was the same man still; as he looked at us with his clear grey eyes, he seemed to take us all in, and each separate man thought he was looking at him. Presently he pointed with his sword to La Haye Sainte, and cried out to us—

“We’re going to take that! You must act all together. It’s the chief point of the battle. I shall lead you myself. Battalions file to the left!”

We set off at the quick step. On the high road we were made to march in companies of three lines; I was in the second; Marshal Ney rode in front, with the two commandants and Captain Florentin; he had put back his sword into the sheath. The bullets whistled round us by hundreds, and the cannon roared in such a way in the valley of Hougomont on the left, and on the right in our rear, that it was like the booming of a huge bell, when at last you don’t hear the separate strokes, but only a huge humming. Every now and then one of our men fell, and the rest went on over his body.

Two or three times the marshal looked back to see if we marched in good order; he looked so cool and collected, that it seemed natural to me not to be afraid; his countenance gave confidence to all, and every one thought—

“Ney is with us—the others are dead men!”

That’s one of the fallacies of human nature; for a great many of our people fell on the way. Well, the nearer we came to the great building, the more distinctly was the sound of the musketry heard, amid the roaring of the cannon; and now we could distinctly see

the flashes from the muskets fired out of the windows, the great roof dimly appearing through the smoke, and the road strewn with great stones.

We marched along by a hedge. Behind the hedge the fire of our sharpshooters was heard; for the first brigade of Alix's division had not quitted the orchard. When they saw us defiling along the high road they raised a cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" and as the whole fire of the Germans was then concentrated upon us, Marshal Ney drew his sword, and shouted, in a voice that was heard a long distance off—

"Forward!"

Then we set off, through the smoke, with two or three other officers. We all set off running, our cartridge boxes flapping to and fro at our flanks, and our guns held ready. In the rear, at some distance, they were beating the charge; we lost sight of the marshal, and did not see him again till we got near a barn that separated the garden from the road, when we descried him on horseback under the great gate. It seemed that others had already tried to break down this gate, for heaps of dead bodies, mingled with beams and paving-stones, were piled around it, extending to the middle of the road. Fire poured forth from every hole in the building, and the thick smell of powder was everywhere.

"Break that down for me!" cried the marshal, whose face had completely changed.

And we all rushed forward, fifteen and twenty at a time, and threw away our guns, and seized beams, which we thrust against the door, that creaked and then sounded like thunder. At each blow one would have thought it must give way. Through the cracks

one could see paving-stones on the other side, piled up to the very top. The gate was riddled with balls. If it had fallen, it would have crushed us; but fury made us blind. We no longer looked like men; some had no shakos on, others were in tatters, almost in their shirts, and blood was running on their hands, and down their legs, and amid the rolling of the musketry volleys of grapeshot came down from the ridges, and the paving-stones around us flew in fragments.

I looked round, but could see neither Zebedee nor Buche, nor any one belonging to my company. The marshal had also gone away. Our fury redoubled; and as the beams swung to and fro, and men became mad with rage, when they saw that the door would not give way, all at once cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" arose in the courtyard with a terrible din. Every one then understood that our troops were in the farm, and all made haste to drop the beams and snatch up their guns, and leap into the garden through the breaches to see where the others had got in. It was behind the farm, by a door which led into a barn. We went in, in a row, like a lot of wolves. The interior of this old building, which was full of straw, and contained hay-lofts and stables thatched with straw, looked like one of those nests full of blood where the sparrow-hawk has passed.

On a great dungheap, in the middle of the courtyard, they were bayoneting the Germans, who uttered savage cries and imprecations.

I rushed through the massacre, haphazard. I heard some one crying "Joseph! Joseph!" and I looked, thinking, "It's Buche calling me!" Then I immediately descried him on the right, before the door of



a wood-loft, holding his bayonet out to keep back five or six of our men. At the same time I saw Zebedee; for our company was in this corner, and running to Buche's assistance, I cried out—

“Zebedee!”

Then rushing through the crowd, I shouted to Buche—

“What is it?”

“They want to massacre my prisoners!”

I placed myself by his side. The others, in their fury, were loading their guns to kill us; they were *voltigeurs* belonging to another battalion. Zebedee came up with several men of our company, and without asking what was the matter, he seized one of the most formidable ones by the throat, crying out—

“My name is Zebedee, sergeant in the 6th Light Infantry; after this affair, we'll have an explanation together.”

Then the others went away; and Zebedee said to me—

“What's the matter, Joseph?”

I told him that we had some prisoners; and he immediately became pale with anger against us. But, going into the wood-room, he saw an old major, who held out the hilt of his sword to him in silence, and a soldier, who said in German—

“Spare my life, Frenchman!—don't take my life!”

At such a moment, when the cries of those who were being killed still resounded through the courtyard, that moved one's heart; and Zebedee said to them—

“Good—I receive you as my prisoners!”

He went out again, and shut the door. We did not quit the place till the recall began to sound. Then when the men had fallen in again, Zebedee informed

Captain Florentin that we had a major and a soldier as prisoners. They were brought out, and made to march across the courtyard without arms, and then were put into a room with three or four others. They were all who remained of the two Nassau battalions to whom the defence of La Haye Sainte had been intrusted.

While this was going on, two other Nassau battalions, who were coming up to the assistance of their comrades, had been massacred by our cuirassiers outside, so that at this moment the victory was ours; we were masters of the principal advanced post of the English, we could begin the grand attack on the centre, cut the enemy off from the road to Brussels, and force him into the bad roads in the forest of Soignies. We had had a hard time, but the principal part of the battle was done. At two hundred paces from the English line, well under cover, we could fall upon them, and without boasting, I think that with the bayonet, and well supported by our cavalry, we could have pierced their line; and if we worked well, we should not want more than an hour to finish the business. But while we were still quite elated, and while officers, drummers, trumpeters, and men, all pell-mell among the ruins, thought only of stretching their limbs, and taking breath, and rejoicing, all at once the news spread that the Prussians were coming up and would attack us in flank, and that we should have two battles to wage, one in the front and another on the right; and that we ran a risk of being surrounded by forces twice as numerous as our own.

This was terrible news; and yet several senseless fellows said—

“So much the better! Let the Prussians come! We shall crush them all together,”

But those men who had not lost their heads immediately understood how wrong we had been not to profit by our victory at Ligny, and to let the Prussians go off quietly during the night without sending cavalry to pursue them, as is always done. It may be boldly affirmed that that great fault was the cause of our disaster at Waterloo. The Emperor had certainly, next day at noon, sent Marshal Grouchy with thirty-two thousand men on the track of the Prussians, but it was much too late; they had had time to rally during those fifteen hours, to resume the offensive, and to communicate with the English. It must be remembered that on the day after Ligny the Prussians had still ninety thousand men, thirty thousand of whom were fresh troops, and two hundred and seventy-five guns. With such an army, they could do whatever they pleased; they could even fight a second battle against the Emperor; but what they liked better was to attack us in flank while we had the English opposite us. It's so clear and simple, that I can't tell how people see anything wonderful in it. Blucher had already played us the same trick at Leipzig, and now he was repeating it by letting Grouchy pursue him, a long way behind. Could Grouchy compel him to come back towards him, while Blucher wanted to go forward? Could he prevent him from leaving thirty or forty thousand men, to detain the troops who were pursuing him, and going with the rest to Wellington's assistance?

Our only hope was that an order had been sent to Grouchy to come back to us, and that he would come in the rear of the Prussians; but the Emperor had sent no such order.

You must know that these ideas did not occur to us

simple soldiers, but to our officers and generals ; as for us, we knew nothing ; we were there like victims who do not suspect that their hour is near.

Well, I have said everything that I think ; and now I am going to tell you the rest of the battle as I saw it myself, that every one may know as much about it as I do.

## CHAPTER XXI.

ALMOST directly after the news of the arrival of the Prussians, the recall began to beat; the battalions disentangled themselves, and ours, with another belonging to the Quinot brigade, remained to guard La Haye Sainte, and all the others marched off to join the corps of General Erlon, which was again advancing into the valley, and trying to outflank the English on the left.

Our two battalions made haste to close up the doors and breaches, the best way they could, with beams and paving-stones. Men were posted in ambuscade at all the holes the enemy had made in the direction of the orchard and of the road.

It was over a stable, at the corner of the farm, at a thousand or twelve hundred paces from Hougoumont, that Zebedee, Buche, and I were posted with the rest of the company. I can still see before me the row of holes, at a man's height from the ground, that the Germans had pierced in the wall to defend the orchard. As we mounted, we looked through these holes at our line of battle, at the great road from Brussels to Charleroi, the little farms of Belle Alliance, Rossomme, and Gros Caillon, which bordered it, the Old Guard standing with shouldered arms across the high road, and the staff on a little acclivity on the left; and further on, in the same direction, behind the ravine of Planchenoit,

the white smoke extending over the trees, and continually bursting forth afresh; it was the attack of the first Prussian corps.

We heard afterwards that the Emperor had sent ten thousand men, under the command of Lobau, to stop them. The combat had begun; but the Old Guard and the Young Guard, Milhaud's cuirassiers, those of Kellermann and the chasseurs of Lefebvre Desnoëttes—in fact, all our magnificent cavalry—remained in position; the great and real battle was still against the English.

How many thoughts passed through one's mind at this grand spectacle, and the immense plain, which the Emperor must have seen with his mind, more plainly than we could see it with our eyes! We should have stayed there for hours if Captain Florentin had not suddenly come up.

"Well, what are you doing there?" he called out. "Are you going to defend the road against the Guard? Come, make haste—pierce me this wall on the side towards the enemy."

Every one picked up the hammers and pickaxes the Germans had left on the floor, and we made holes in the wall of the loft. That did not take a quarter of an hour; and then we could see the combat of Hougomont, the buildings on fire, the bombshells which burst every moment among the ruins, the Scottish infantry soldiers in ambush on the road behind; and, on our right, quite near us, only two gunshots off, the English drawing their first line towards the centre, and posting their cannon up higher, for our sharpshooters were beginning to dismount them. But the remainder of their line did not stir; they had red squares and black squares like on a chessboard, some in front of and some

behind the hollow way; these squares were near each other at the angles; to attack them, one had to pass through a cross fire; their pieces remained in position on the margin of the plain; further off, on the bend of the ridge of Mont Saint Jean, their cavalry was waiting.

The position of these English seemed to me still stronger than in the morning; and as already we had not succeeded against their left wing, as the Prussians were attacking us in flank, the idea came into my mind for the first time that we were not sure of winning the battle. I pictured to myself our terrible rout, if unhappily we were to lose—between two armies, one in front, and the other on our flank—the second invasion that would follow, the forced contributions, the sieges of towns, the return of the emigrants, and their vengeance.

I felt that this thought was making me turn quite pale.

The same moment, cries of “Vive l’Empereur!” rose from thousands of voices behind us. Buche was near me in a corner of the loft; he was crying, “Vive l’Empereur!” with our comrades; and leaning over his shoulder, I saw all our cavalry of the right wing—namely, Milhaud’s cuirassiers, the lancers and chasseurs of the Guard, more than five thousand men, advancing at the trot; they were riding across the high road, and down into the valley between Hougomont and La Haye Sainte. I knew that they were going to attack the English squares, and that our fate was at stake.

The captains of the English guns gave their commands in such a piercing voice, that one could hear them through all the tumult and the innumerable cries of “Vive l’Empereur!” It was a terrible moment when

our cuirassiers passed down into the valley ; it seemed to me like a torrent at the meeting of the snows, when the sun shines upon millions of icicles. The horses, with the great blue portmanteaus behind their saddles, were all stretching out together like stags, clattering over the earth ; the trumpets sounded fiercely amid the thundering din ; and as they went by, the first discharge of grapeshot made our old barn quiver. The wind blew from Hougoumont and filled all the openings with smoke ; we bent forward to look out ; then the second and third discharge followed close upon each other.

Through the smoke I could see the English artillerymen abandoning their guns, and retreating with their teams ; and immediately our cuirassiers were upon the squares, whose fire burst out in a zigzag line along the ridge. There could be heard a confused noise, groans, clashing of arms, neighing of horses, and a great discharge at intervals ; then came fresh cries, fresh tumult, renewed groans. And in the smoke that thickened about the farm, horses passed by twenties like shadows, with manes erect, some of them dragging along a horseman with his foot caught in the stirrup.

This went on for more than an hour !

After Milhaud's cuirassiers came the chasseurs of Lefebvre Desnoëttes ; after the lancers, Kellermann's cuirassiers ; after these, the mounted grenadiers of the Guard ; after the grenadiers, the dragoons. All these men rode up the ridge at a trot, waving their sabres in the air, and uttering cries of "*Vive l'Empereur !*" that pierced the sky.

At every fresh charge one would have thought that they must overturn everything ; but when the trumpets sounded the rally, when they came back at a gallop,



pursued by grapeshot, to reform at the end of the plateau, there stood the long red lines, immovable as walls, in the smoke.

These English are good soldiers. We must also remember that they knew Blucher was coming to their assistance with sixty thousand men, and naturally that knowledge gave them immense courage.

In spite of that, towards six o'clock, we had destroyed half their squares; but then the horses of our cuirassiers, exhausted by twenty charges in the soft earth sodden by the rain, could no longer advance among the heaps of dead.

And night was coming on. The great battle-field behind us was getting empty. At last the great plain on which we had encamped the night before was deserted, and below the Old Guard alone remained across the road, with shouldered arms; all were gone, on the right against the Prussians, in front against the English. We looked at one another in dismay.

It was already getting dark, when Captain Florentin appeared at the top of the ladder, with his two hands grasping the floor of the loft, and cried out to us, in a solemn voice—

“Fusiliers, the hour has come to conquer or to die!”

I remembered that these words were in the Emperor's proclamation, and we all came down in a line. It was not quite dark yet; but the devastated courtyard was quite grey, and the dead were already stiff on the dung-heap and along the walls.

The captain ranged us along the right side of the courtyard, and the commandant of the other battalion posted his men along the left side. Our drums sounded

for the last time in the old building, and we marched through the little back gate into the garden; we had to bend our heads to get through.

Outside, the walls of the garden had been swept down. Wounded men were crouching among the ruins, one binding up his head, another his arm or his leg; a sutler woman, with her donkey and cart, and wearing a broad straw hat that hung down over her shoulders, was also crouching in a corner; I don't know what had brought the unfortunate creature to this place. Several horses, exhausted with fatigue, their heads hanging and covered with dirt and blood, looked sorry jades indeed.

What a difference from the morning! Then indeed the companies came up with the loss of half their men, but still they were companies. Now confusion was beginning to spread; three days had sufficed to reduce us to the condition in which we were at Leipzig after a year's fighting. The remains of our battalion and of another were the only ones who formed an orderly line; and, to tell you the truth, fear was spreading among us.

When men have not eaten since the evening before, when they have been fighting all day long, and when at night, after their strength is exhausted, the weakness of hunger seizes them, fear comes with it, and the most courageous lose hope; all our great and disastrous retreats come from that.

And yet, in spite of all, we were not vanquished, for the cuirassiers still kept their ground on the plateau; on all sides, amid the roaring of the cannon and the tumult, one cry only was heard—

“The Guard is coming!”

Ah, yes, the Guard was coming! It was coming at

the end. We could see from afar the tall bearskins advancing in good order along the high road.

Those who have not seen the Guard advance on a field of battle will never understand what confidence men can have in a picked corps, and the kind of respect that strength and courage inspire. The men of the Old Guard were nearly all peasants of the old pre-republican times, men of at least five feet six, French measurement, wiry and well-built. They had driven the plough in their time for the convent and the chateau; after that they had joined the *levée en masse* of the whole people; they had gone to Germany, Holland, Italy, Egypt, Poland, Spain, and Russia; first under Kleber, Hoche, and Marceau, and afterwards under Napoleon, who treated them well, and gave them high pay. They considered themselves to a certain extent as the proprietors of a great farm that they must defend, and even extend more and more. That gave them a certain standing, and it seemed as if they were defending their own property. They no longer knew their relations, their cousins, or the people of their districts; they only knew the Emperor, who was their God; and finally, they had adopted the King of Rome to inherit all with them, to keep them, and honour their old age. Never has anything been seen like it; they were so accustomed to march, to stand in line, to charge, shoot, and attack with the bayonet, that they seemed to do it all alone, just as they wished. When they advanced with shouldered arms, with their great bearskin hats, their white waistcoats, and their gaiters, they seemed all to look like one another; and one could easily see that it was the Emperor's right arm coming forward. When it was said in the ranks,

"The Guard is going to charge," it was just the same as saying, "The battle is won!" But at this moment, after the great massacres and the terrible attacks that had been repulsed, seeing the Prussians falling on our flank, men said to one another—

"It's the grand attack!"

But each one thought—

"If it fails, all is lost!"

That's why we all looked so anxiously at the Guard, as it advanced along the road. It was Ney again who led it, as he had led the attack of the cuirassiers. The Emperor knew that no one could lead the Guard better than Ney, only he ought to have sent it out an hour earlier, when our cuirassiers were among the squares; then all would have been won. But the Emperor looked on his Guard as the apple of his eye; if he had had his Guard, five days afterwards, at Paris, Lafayette and the rest would not have remained long in their chamber to turn him out; but then he had it no longer!

That is why he had waited so long before sending it out. He hoped that the cavalry with Ney would overturn everything, or that Grouchy's thirty-two thousand men would come up at the sound of the cannon, and that he could send these out instead of his Guard; because one can always replace thirty or forty thousand men by a conscription, whereas to get up a Guard like that one must begin at twenty-five years, and gain fifty victories; and what is best, and steadiest, and toughest of all the army, is the Guard.

Well, the Guard was coming on—we saw it. Ney, old Friant, and three or four others were marching in front. We saw nothing else but that: all the rest, the roar of the cannon, the fusillade, the cries of the

wounded, everything was alike forgotten. But that did not last long, for the English had also understood that it was the crowning attack; they made haste to concentrate all their forces to receive it.

One would have thought that, on our left, the battlefield was empty; there was no more firing, either because the ammunition was exhausted, or because the enemy was forming in a new order. On the right, on the contrary, in the direction of Frichemont, the cannonade was redoubled in violence; the whole affair seemed to have dragged in that direction, and we dared not say to each other, "The Prussians are attacking us—there's another army coming to crush us!" No, this idea appeared too horrible; when all at once a staff officer passed by like lightning, crying—

"Grouchy! Marshal Grouchy's coming!"

It was at the moment when the four battalions swerved to the right of the high road, to mount behind the orchard and begin the attack.

How many times during the last fifty years have I not pictured to myself this attack during the night, and how many times have I not heard it described by others! To hear these stories one would suppose the Guard was alone, that it advanced like a wall, and alone endured the enemy's fire. But all this occurred in the midst of the greatest confusion; this terrible attack was delivered by our whole army; all the remains of the left wing and of the centre took part in it; all that remained of the cavalry that had been exhausted by six hours of fighting; all who could still stand upright, and lift their arms. The infantry of Reille concentrated on the left; we were around La Haye Sainte, and that was all that remained, and would not be massacred.

Let no one say that we were struck with panic terror, and wanted to run like cowards, for it's not true. When the rumour went that Grouchy was coming, the very wounded rose and took their places in the ranks. One would have thought that a breeze was blowing that made dead men march; all the wretches lying behind La Haye Sainte, with bandaged heads or arms and legs, their clothes in rags and covered with blood, all who could put one foot before the other, joined the Guard, who passed out beyond the breaches in the last garden, and every man bit his last cartridge.

The drums beat the charge, and our cannon had begun to thunder again. On the ridge all was silent. Lines of English cannon stood abandoned, and one would have thought our enemies were gone. It was not until the bearskins began to show over the plateau that five or six volleys of grapeshot announced to us that they were waiting for us.

Then it was clear that these English, Germans, Belgians, and Hanoverians, all these people whom we had been sabring and massacring since the morning, had reformed at the back, and that we must charge through them. Many wounded men retired then, and the Guard, on whom fell the thick of the hail of bullets, advanced almost alone—alone through the grapeshot and musketballs, overturning everything, but it drew closer and closer together, and diminished visibly. After twenty minutes all the mounted officers were on foot; it stopped before a musketry fire of such a horrible kind that we ourselves, two hundred paces in the rear, could not hear our own guns go off, and our muskets seemed to be flashing in the pan.

In the end all this mass of enemies, on the right and

on the left, rose up, with cavalry on their flanks, and fell upon us. The four battalions of the Guard, reduced from three thousand men to twelve hundred, could not support such a charge, and gave ground slowly, and we gave ground too, defending ourselves with our muskets and bayonets.

We had seen more terrible combats, but this was the last. When we reached the edge of the plateau to go down, all the plain beneath us, already covered with shadows, was in confusion and rout; all were scattering and retreating, some on horseback, some on foot; only one battalion of the Guard, drawn up in a square near the farm, and three other battalions farther off, with another square of the Guard, at the cross-road of Planchenoit, remained firm as castles amid an inundation that swept off all the rest. All were going off—hussars, chasseurs, cuirassiers, artillery, infantry, pell-mell on the road, across the fields, like an army of barbarians in flight. Along the ravine of Planchenoit the dark sky was lit up by the firing; the Guard's square still held its own against Bülow, and prevented him from cutting us off from the road; but nearer to us other Prussians, cavalry, were rushing down into the valley like a stream pouring over its dam. Old Blücher had also come up with forty thousand men; he was driving back our right wing, and scattering it before him.

What can I tell you more? It was utter rout; we were surrounded on all sides; the English were driving us down into the valley, and in the valley Blücher was coming up. Our generals and officers, the Emperor himself, had no other resource but to throw themselves into the centre of the square; and yet they say that we

poor unhappy men were seized with a panic terror. Never was anything more unjust.

I was running towards the farm with Buche and five or six comrades; shells were rolling and bursting around us, and we came up like lost creatures near the road where English horse soldiers were already galloping along, calling out to each other—

“No quarter! no quarter!”

At that moment the square of the Guard began to retreat. The men fired in all directions to keep off the poor wretches who wanted to rush in; only the generals and officers could escape that way.

What I should never forget were I to live a thousand years is the tremendous confused cry that resounded through the valley for more than a league, and in the distance the grenadiers' call was being beaten, like the tocsin sounding in the midst of a conflagration; but it was even more terrible than that; it was the last appeal of France, of a proud and courageous people; it was the voice of the country calling, “Help me, my children—I die!” No, I cannot paint that for you! That rolling of the drums of the Old Guard in the midst of our disaster was at once moving and terrible! I sobbed like a child; Buche was dragging me away, and I cried out to him—

“John, leave me alone! We are lost! we have lost all!”

The thought of Catharine, of Mons. Goulden, of Phalsbourg, did not come into my head. What I wonder at, even now, is that we were not massacred a hundred times on that road, along which files of English and Prussians were passing. Perhaps they took us for Germans; perhaps they were running after the Emperor, for every one hoped to catch him.



Opposite the little farm of Rossomme we had to turn into the fields on the right; it was there that the last square of the Guard still sustained the attack of the Prussians; but it did not hold together long, for twenty minutes afterwards the enemy appeared on the road, and the Prussian chasseurs went out in groups to stop those who straggled or remained behind. One would have thought that the road was a bridge, and that all who quitted it fell into a gulf.

At the descent of the ravine, behind the inn of Passe-Avant, some Prussian hussars galloped towards us. There were not more than five or six of them, and they cried out to us to surrender; but if we had turned up the butt-ends of our muskets in token of yielding, they would have sabred us. We pointed our muskets at them; and seeing that we were not wounded, they rode off. This forced us to get back into the road, along which the shouts and tumult extended for at least two leagues. Cavalry, infantry, artillery, ambulances, baggage, all mingled together; the men roaring, fighting, weeping, and the horses neighing. No, not even at Leipzig have I seen such a spectacle as that. The moon was rising over the wood, behind Planchenoit, and shone down upon the crowd of busbies, bearskins, helmets, sabres, bayonets, overturned tumbrils, and encumbered cannons; the crush became greater every moment; plaintive cries arose from one end of the line to the other, mounting and descending the ridges, and dying away in the distance like a wail. But saddest of all were the screams of women, those poor wretches who follow armies, when they were trampled down, or pushed down the bank with their carts; they uttered cries that one could hear above the enormous uproar,

and nobody turned his head, not a man stepped aside to stretch forth his hand to them. Every one for himself! I am crushing you? So much the worse for you. I'm the stronger. You cry out? What's that to me? Stand off—stand off! I'm on horseback. I shall hit you. Make room! I only want to get away myself. The others are doing the same thing. Room for the Emperor—room for the marshal! The stronger tramples down the weaker. Strength is the only thing in this world. Forward! forward! Let the cannons crush everything, so long as they are brought off. The cannons can't get any farther. Then uncouple and cut the traces, and flog the horses that are carrying us off. Let them keep on as long as they can, and then let them die. What's all the rest to us? If we are not the stronger, why our turn will come to be crushed, and then we shall cry out, and no one will care for our cries. "*Sauve qui peut!*" and "*Vive l'Empereur!*" But the Emperor is dead.

Every one thought that the Emperor had died with the Old Guard—that seemed a matter of course.

Prussian cavalry soldiers rode past us in files, waving their sabres in the air and crying "*Hurrah!*" They looked as if they were escorting us, and they cut down every man who left the high road. They took no prisoners, neither did they attack the column itself; some dropping shots were fired, to right and left. Behind, a good way off, we could see a red flame rising up in the darkness; the farm of Caillon was on fire.

We hastened onward; hunger, fatigue, despair weighed us down, and we would have liked to die; and yet the hope of escape kept us up. As we walked on, Buche said to me—

"Joseph, keep yourself up! I will never abandon you!"

And I answered—

"We will die together. I can hold out no longer; it's too horrible. It would be better to lie down."

"No!" he said, "we must keep on. The Prussians take no prisoners. Look! they're cutting down every one, as we did at Ligny."

So we kept along the road, with thousands of others, exhausted and downcast; but, nevertheless, turning from time to time in a body to fire if a Prussian squadron came too close. We were still the firmest and most steady. Here and there we came upon abandoned tumbrils, cannons, and waggons; the ditches to right and left were full of knapsacks, cartouche-boxes, guns, and sabres; many had flung away everything to get away quicker.

But the most terrible thing of all was to see the great ambulance-waggons standing in the middle of the high road full of wounded men. The drivers had cut the traces, and gone off with the horses for fear of being made prisoners. These unhappy people, half dead, their arms hanging listlessly down, who looked at us as we passed with glances of despair, remind me, when I think of them to-day, of those tufts of straw and hay that remain clinging to the bushes after an inundation, when one says, "There's the harvest; there's all that the storm has left us!" That's what I have thought for the last fifty years.

What caused me the greatest sorrow, and broke my heart amid this disaster, was that I did not see one man of our battalion beyond us two. I thought to myself, "They cannot all be dead;" and I called out—

"John, if I could find Zebedee it would give me courage."

But he did not reply to this; he only said—

"Let us try to get away, Joseph! For me, if I am fortunate enough to see Harberg again, I shall not complain of the potatoes any more—no, no. God has punished me. I shall be glad enough to work, and to go into the forest with the axe on my shoulder. If I only don't go back lame, and am obliged to hold out my hand for charity on the high road to live, as so many others have had to do! Let us try to get away with whole skins."

I thought that he spoke very sensibly.

Towards half-past ten o'clock we got near Genappe; horrible cries were heard from afar. Great fires of straw had been lit in the middle of the main street to light up the confusion, and we could see the houses and streets so full of people, horses, and baggage that one could not move a step forward. We were well aware that the Prussians might arrive at any moment; that they would have cannons, and that it would be better for us to pass round the village than to be made prisoners in a body. Therefore we turned off to the left, across the corn-fields, with very many others. We passed the Thy, up to our waists in water, and towards midnight we arrived at the two houses of Quatre-Bras.

We had done wisely in not entering Genappe; for we could already hear the cannon fired by the Prussians against the village, and the sound of musketry. A number of fugitives also arrived on the road—cuirassiers, lancers, and chasseurs—not one stopped.

And now hunger tormented us in a terrible way. We could well imagine that in these houses everything had

been eaten up long ago ; but in spite of that we entered the one on the left. The floor was covered with straw, on which wounded men were lying. We had hardly opened the door when they all began to cry out, and truly the smell was so bad that we went out again directly, and took the way to Charleroi.

The moon shone magnificently. On the right, among the corn, we saw a number of corpses that had not been buried. Buche went down into a furrow where three or four Englishmen were lying, about twenty-five paces off, one upon another. I wondered what he wanted among the corpses ; but presently he came back with a tin bottle, which he held to his ear and shook, and he said to me—

“Joseph—it’s full!”

But before uncorking it he washed it in a ditch, full of water ; and then he opened it and drank, saying—

“It’s brandy!”

He passed it to me, and I drank too. I felt my life coming back to me ; and I handed back the bottle to him, still half full, blessing Heaven for the good idea it had given us.

We looked round on all sides to see if some of the dead might not have some bread too. But as the tumult grew louder, and we were not in force to resist the attacks of the Prussians, if they were to surround us, we set out again, full of strength and courage. That brandy already made us look at things in a better light. I said—

“John, now the worst is over ; we shall see Phalsbourg and Harberg once more. We are on a good road, which leads to France. If we had won the day we should have been obliged to go further, to the furthest

part of Germany. We should have had to beat the Austrians and Russians; and if we had the good fortune to come out of it, we should have returned as veterans, with grey heads, to live in garrison at Petite Pierre or somewhere else."

Those were the thoughts that passed through my head; they did not prevent my pushing forward with renewed strength. And Buche said—

"The English are very right to carry these tin bottles. If I had not seen the metal shining in the moonlight, I should have never thought of going to see what it was."

While we were thus talking, horsemen rode by us every moment. Their horses could hardly stand, but by dint of beating and spurring, the riders made them trot somehow. The noise of the tumult afar off began again, and the firing; but happily, we had a good start.

It might have been one o'clock in the morning, and we thought ourselves safe, when all at once Buche said to me—

"Joseph, here are the Prussians!"

And, looking behind me, I saw in the moonlight five brown hussars, of the same regiment as those who had cut Klipfel to pieces a year before; and that appeared to me a bad sign.

"Is your gun loaded?" I asked Buche.

"Yes."

"Well, then, wait. We shall have to defend ourselves. I shall not yield."

"Nor shall I," said he. "I would rather die than be led off a prisoner."

Directly afterwards the Prussian officer cried out to us in an arrogant voice—

“Lay down your arms!”

And Buche, instead of waiting, like I did, shot him through the breast.

Then the four others rushed upon us. Buche received a sabre-cut that split his shako to the peak, but he killed the man who had wounded him, with a bayonet-thrust. Then there were three left. I had my gun loaded, and Buche had posted himself with his back to a walnut-tree; each time the Prussians, who had drawn back, began to advance, I pointed my gun at them, and none of them liked to be the first to be killed. And as we waited, Buche with his bayonet advanced, and I with my gun at my shoulder, we heard a galloping on the road; that frightened us, for we thought it was some more Prussians, but it was some lancers of ours. Then the hussars rode down into the corn-fields on the right, and Buche made haste to reload his gun.

Our lancers passed by, and we followed them at a run. An officer who was with them told us that the Emperor had started for Paris, and that King Jerome had taken the command of the army.

Buche had the skin of his head all split, but the bone was unharmed; the blood was running down over his cheeks. He bound up his head with his handkerchief; and after that we met no more Prussians.

At last, towards two o'clock in the morning, when we were so tired that we could hardly walk any further, we saw, five or six hundred paces from us, on the left of the road, a little thicket of birch-trees, and Buche said to me—

“Look, Joseph, let us go in there. Let us lie down and sleep.”

That was the very thing I wanted to do.

We went down across the corn-fields to the wood, and entered a sort of copse, consisting of little trees standing close together. Each of us had kept his knapsack, gun, and cartouche-box. We put our knapsacks on the ground to serve us as pillows; the day had dawned long since, and all the great confused mass had been passing along the road for hours, when we awoke, and quietly resumed our march.



## CHAPTER XXII.

A GREAT number of our comrades and of wounded men remained at Gosselies; but the main body continued their march, and towards nine o'clock we began to descry in the distance the steeples of Charleroi; when all at once cries, and shrieks, and musket-shots were heard in front of us more than half a league off. The whole immense column of unfortunates halted, crying—

“The town is shutting its gates! We are stopped here.”

Dismay and despair were pictured on every face. But a moment afterwards a rumour spread that a convoy of prisoners was coming, and that they would not distribute the food. Then dismay gave way to fury, and all along the road there arose one great cry—

“Let us fall on them! Let us knock down the rascals who starve us! We are betrayed!”

The most cowed and the most exhausted began to hurry onward, raising their sabres, or loading their guns.

One could see at once that it would be a perfect butchery if the drivers and escorts did not give in. Buche himself cried out—

“We must massacre them all! We are betrayed! Come on, Joseph!—let us revenge ourselves!”

But I held him back by the collar, and called out to him—

"No, John, no! We've had massacres enough already! We've escaped from it all; and we must not get killed here, by Frenchmen. Come with me!"

He resisted. But at last I pointed out to him a village on the left of the road, and said to him—

"Look! yonder is the way to Harberg, and there are houses like at Quatre-Vents. Let us rather go there and ask for bread. I have money, and we shall be sure to get some. Come along!—that will be better than attacking convoys, like a band of wolves."

At last he let me drag him away. We went across the fields once more. But for the hunger that urged us on, we should have sat down by the side of the path at every step. But after half-an-hour we arrived, by the mercy of Heaven, at a kind of abandoned farm; the windows were broken, the door stood wide open, and around were great heaps of black earth. We went into the living-room, crying out—

"Is there any one here?"

We knocked upon the furniture with our musket-stocks, but not a soul answered. Our excitement was the greater when we saw some poor wretches coming up by the same road as ourselves, and we thought—

"They will come and eat our bread!"

Ah, those who have never suffered similar privations do not know what a man's fury is. It is horrible—horrible! We had already broken the door of a cabinet full of linen, and were overturning everything with our bayonets, when an old woman crawled out from under a kitchen table which stood before the entrance to the cellar. She sobbed, and said—

"My God, my God, have pity on us!"

This house had been pillaged at dawn of day. They had carried off the horses; the man had disappeared, the servants had run away. In spite of our fury, the sight of the poor old woman made us ashamed of ourselves; and I said to her—

“Don’t be afraid. We are not monsters. Only give us some bread, or we shall perish!”

She sat on an old chair with her withered hands crossed on her knees, and said—

“I’ve nothing left. They have taken all—good heavens—all—all!”

Her grey hair hung down over her cheeks. I could have wept for her and for ourselves.

“Ah, we will go and search for ourselves!” I said to Buche; and we went into all the rooms, and then into the stable. We could see nothing; everything had been carried off or broken.

I was just going out again, when behind the old door, in the shadow, I saw a white object against the wall. I stopped, and stretched out my hand. It was a linen bag with a strap, and I undid it quickly, trembling with eagerness.

Buche looked at me. The bag was heavy. I opened it. There were two great black roots, half a loaf of bread as dry and hard as a stone, a great pair of shears for clipping the hedges, and quite at the bottom of the bag some onions, and grey salt in a paper.

When we saw that we uttered a shout; the fear of seeing the others come made us run out at the back very far, among the rye, hiding and crouching like thieves. All our strength seemed to have come back to us, and we sat down beside a little rivulet. Buche said to me—

"Listen—you'll give me a share?"

"Yes," I answered, "you shall go halves in everything; you let me drink out of your bottle. I'll share with you."

Then he was satisfied.

I cut the bread with my sabre, and said—

"Choose, John—there's your root—here's half of the onions, and the salt shall be between us."

We ate the bread without even softening it in the water; we ate our root, the onions, and the salt. We should have liked to go on eating for ever; however, we were satisfied. Then we knelt down beside the rivulet with our hands in the water, and drank.

"Now let us go," said Buche. "We can leave the bag here."

In spite of the fatigue which bowed our legs, we went away to the left; while on the right, behind us, in the direction of Charleroi, the cries and musket-shots were repeated, and all along the road one could see men fighting. But this was far off. From time to time we turned our heads, and Buche said to me—

"Joseph, you did well to draw me away. But for you I might perhaps have been lying yonder, by the side of the road, killed by a Frenchman. I was too hungry. But where shall we go now?"

I answered—

"Follow me."

We soon passed through a large and handsome village, which had likewise been plundered and abandoned. Farther on, we met some peasants who looked at us with distrustful glances, and stood on one side of the road to let us pass. We must have looked suspicious enough, especially Buche with his bandaged head, and

a week's beard on his chin, thick and hard as the bristles of a wild boar.

Towards one o'clock in the afternoon we had already recrossed the Sambre on the bridge of Chatelet; but as the Prussians were on the road we did not yet make a halt in this place. But already I had good confidence in our escape. I thought—

“If the Prussians continue their pursuit they will certainly follow the main body, to make more prisoners, and pick up the cannons, ammunition-waggons, and baggage.”

This is how men were obliged to reason, who, three days before, had made the world tremble.

I remember that when we arrived, at about three o'clock, at a little village, we stopped in front of a forge to ask for something to drink. Immediately the country people surrounded us, and the smith, a great swarthy man, told us to go into the inn opposite, and that he would come, and we should take a jug of beer with him.

Of course we were pleased at this, for we were afraid of being arrested; we now saw that these people were on our side.

The idea also came into my head that as I had some money left in my bag, now might be the time when it would be useful to me.

Accordingly we went into the little inn, which was one of the poorer sort, with two windows looking on the street, and a round folding door, like in our villages at home. When we had sat down the room became so full of people, men and women, who came to hear the news, that we could scarcely breathe.

Presently the smith came. He had taken off his

leather apron and put on a blue frock ; and directly he came in we noticed that five or six good citizens were following him. They were the mayor, the deputy, and the municipal councillors of the place.

They sat down on the benches opposite us, and caused us to be served with some beer, which they relish in this country. Buche having asked for bread, the inn-keeper's wife brought us the loaf, and a great bit of beef in a flat dish, and they all said to us—

“ Eat—eat ! ”

When one or another began to question us about the battle, the mayor or the smith would interpose, and say—

“ Let the men finish their meal ; you can see they have come a long distance.”

And it was not till we had finished that they questioned us, asking whether it was true that the French had just lost a great battle. It had at first been reported to them that we were the victors, and now a rumour was spreading that we were routed.

We understood that they had heard the report of Ligny, and that this had confused their ideas.

I felt ashamed to confess our utter rout. I looked at Buche, who said—

“ We have been betrayed ! The traitors have divulged our plans—the army was full of traitors commissioned to cry—‘ Sauve qui peut ! ’ How do you suppose we could help losing with such things going on ? ”

This was the first I heard of the said treason. Some wounded men had certainly cried out—“ We are betrayed ! ” but I had not taken any notice of their words ; and when Buche got us out of the scrape in this way I was glad, and astonished too.

Then these people became indignant, with us, against the traitors. We had to explain the battle and the treason to them. Buche said that the Prussians had come up through the treason of Marshal Grouchy. This seemed to me too strong; but the peasants, full of sympathy as they were, made us drink some more beer, and even gave us tobacco and pipes; and at last I said the same as Buche. But afterwards, when we had gone away from there, the thought of our abominable falsehoods made me feel ashamed of myself, and I called out—

“Do you know, John, that the way we told lies about the traitors was not right? If every one tells as much, at last we shall all be traitors, and the Emperor will be the only honest man. It’s disgracing our country to say that we have so many traitors among us. It’s not true.”

“Bah, bah!” he replied, “we have been betrayed; but for that the English and the Prussians would not have made us beat a retreat.”

And until eight o’clock in the evening we did nothing but dispute. By that time we had come to another village, called Bouvigny. We were so tired that our legs were as stiff as stakes, and for a long time we had to summon all our courage to get on at all.

We thought we were now a good way off from the Prussians. As I had money, we went into an inn and asked for a bedroom.

I took out a piece of six livres, to show that we could pay. I had made up my mind to change my clothes next day, to leave my gun, knapsack, and cartouche-box behind me, and make my way home; for I considered the war was over, and was glad, amid all the great mis-

fortunes that had happened, to have got out of the business without broken arms and legs.

That night Buche and I, installed in a little room, with a picture of the Virgin and the child Jesus looking down upon us, slept a most delicious sleep.

Next day, instead of continuing our march, we were glad to remain sitting on good chairs in the kitchen, stretching our legs, and smoking our pipes, while we watched the great pot simmering on the fire, and we said—

“Let us stay quietly here! By to-morrow we shall be thoroughly rested. We will buy two pairs of linen trousers and two blouses; we will cut a couple of good sticks in a hedge, and then go home by short stages.”

It quite moved us to think of these agreeable things. It was from this inn, too, that I wrote to Catharine, Aunt Grethel, and Mons. Goulden. It was only these few words:—

“I am safe. Let us thank God! I am coming. I embrace you with all my heart a thousand and a thousand times!—JOSEPH BERTHA.”

While I was writing this I praised the Lord; but many things were to happen to me before I was to mount our staircase, at the corner of the Rue Fouquet, opposite the Bœuf Rouge. When a man has been taken by the conscription, he must not be in a hurry to write that he is let go. This happiness does not depend on us, and it's no use wishing to get away.

At last my letter went off to the post, and all that day we remained at the Golden Sheep.

After eating a good supper, we went up to bed. I said to Buche—



"Well, John, it's better to do what one likes than to be obliged to answer the roll-call."

We both of us laughed, in spite of the misfortunes of our country, without thinking of them, of course; for we should have been great rascals if we had laughed at them.

For the second time we were sleeping in our comfortable beds, when at one in the morning we were roused up in a remarkable fashion—the drums were beating. We could hear marching all through the village. I pushed Buche, who said—

"I can hear it—the Prussians are outside."

You can imagine our dismay. But a moment afterwards it was much worse, for there was a knocking at the door of the inn, which was opened, and in two seconds the great room below was full of people. They came upstairs. Buche and I had got up. He said—

"I shall defend myself if they try to take me."

I did not dare to think about what I should do.

We were already nearly dressed, and I hoped to be able to run away in the darkness before I was recognised, when blows were struck upon our door, and a voice cried—

"Open!"

We were obliged to obey.

An infantry officer came in, wet through with the rain, with his great blue cloak clinging to his epaulettes; he was followed by an old sergeant, who carried a lantern. We saw at once that they were Frenchmen.

The officer said to us sharply—

"Where do you come from?"

"From Mont Saint Jean, lieutenant," I replied.

"To what regiment do you belong?"

“To the 6th Light Infantry.”

He looked at the number on my shako, that lay on the table, and I noticed his at the same moment. He also belonged to the 6th Light Infantry.

“What battalion?” he asked, with a frown.

“The third.”

Buche, who had turned quite pale, said nothing. The officer looked at our guns, knapsacks, and cartouches-boxes, put away behind the bed in a corner.

“You have deserted,” he said.

“No, lieutenant, we went away last of all, towards eight o’clock, from Mont Saint Jean.”

“Come down; we shall see about that.”

Accordingly we went down.

The officer followed us, and the sergeant marched on before with the lantern.

The great room below was full of officers of the 12th Mounted Chasseurs and of the 6th Light Infantry. The commandant of the 4th battalion of the 6th was walking to and fro, smoking a little wooden pipe. All these people were wet through, and covered with mud.

The officer said a few words to the commandant, who stopped, and fixed his black eyes upon us. He had a hooked nose, that seemed to bend downwards into his grey moustache. He did not look very gentle, and immediately put five or six questions to us concerning our departure from Ligny, our route from Quatre-Bras, and the battle; he winked his eyes and set his lips close. The others walked to and fro, clanking their sabres, and paying no attention. At last the commandant said—

“Sergeant, these two men will join the second company. You may go.”

He took up his pipe again from the corner of the chimney-piece, and we went out with the sergeant, very glad to be out of it so cheaply, for we might have been shot as deserters before the enemy. The sergeant led us two hundred paces away, to the end of the village, near a large cart-shed. Fires had been kindled further off in the fields; some men were asleep under the shed near the stable doors, and the beams that supported it. A little fine rain was falling in the street; the puddles of water trembled in the grey, blurred moonlight. We remained standing under a projecting roof, at the corner of the old house, thinking of our misfortunes.

After an hour had elapsed the drums began to beat, the men shook the wisps of hay and straw from their coats, and we set out again. It was still dark night; behind us the hussars were sounding to boot and saddle.

Between three and four o'clock, at the dawning of day, we saw a great number of other regiments, cavalry, infantry, and artillery, on the march like ourselves, by different routes—the whole of Marshal Grouchy's corps in retreat! The wet weather, the dark sky, these long lines of men overwhelmed with fatigue, our annoyance at being retaken, and the thought that all our efforts, and all the blood spilt, were only bringing about a second invasion—all this made us march with our heads bent; nothing was heard but the sound of our footsteps in the mud.

This melancholy had lasted a long time, when a voice said to me—

“Good morning, Joseph.”

I roused myself, and looked at the man who had spoken to me; then I recognised the son of Martin, the turner, our neighbour at Phalsbourg; he was a corporal

in the 6th, and was marching with the rest, carrying his gun as he liked. We shook hands. It was a real consolation to me to see a man from my own neighbourhood.

In spite of the rain, which continued to pour down, and the great fatigue, we kept on talking of this terrible campaign. I told him the story of the battle of Waterloo; he told me that the 4th battalion, after leaving Fleurus, had marched upon Wavre with the whole of Grouchy's corps; that during the afternoon of the next day, the 18th, cannonading had been heard on the left, and that every one wanted to march in that direction; that the officers were of the same opinion, but that the marshal, having received positive orders, had continued his way towards Wavre. It was not till between six and seven o'clock, and when it was certain the Prussians had escaped, that the direction had been changed towards the left to join the Emperor; unfortunately it was too late, and towards midnight they had been obliged to take up a position in the fields. Each battalion had formed a square. At three o'clock in the morning the cannon of the Prussians had roused up the bivouacs, and they had fired at each other till two in the afternoon, when the order came for them to retreat. Again it was very late, said Martin, for part of the army which had beaten that of the Emperor was already in our rear, and that forced us to march all the rest of the day and the following night, till six o'clock in the morning, to get clear. At six o'clock the battalion had taken up a position near the village of Temploux; at ten the Prussians came in superior numbers; the most vigorous resistance had been offered to them to give the artillery and baggage time to pass

the bridge at Namur. The whole army corps had successfully defiled through the town, except the 4th battalion, which, through the fault of Commandant Delong, had let itself be turned to the right of the road, and was obliged to throw itself into the Sambre to avoid being cut in two. Several men had been taken prisoners, and others had been drowned in the attempt to swim across the river. This is all that Martin could tell me; he had no news from our home.

That same day we passed through Givet; the battalion bivouacked near the village of Hierches, half a league further on. Next day, after passing through Fumay and Rocroy, we slept at Bourg Fidèle; the 23rd of June at Blombay; the 24th at Saulse Lenoy; and here we heard of the Emperor's abdication. The next days we slept at Vitry, near Rheims, at Jonchery, and at Soissons; from thence the battalion took the road towards Villers Cotterets; but the enemy having already got before us we changed our direction towards La Ferté Milon, and we bivouacked at Neuchelles, a village which had been destroyed by the invasion of 1814, and not yet rebuilt.

We started from this place on the 29th towards one o'clock in the morning, and passed through Meaux. We were obliged to take the route to Lagny, because the Prussians occupied that towards Claye; we continued our march all that day and the following night.

On the 30th, at five o'clock in the morning, we were at the bridge of St. Maur. The same day, at three o'clock in the afternoon, we had passed Paris on the outside, and bivouacked at a place rich in all sorts of productions, and called Vaugirard, on the road to Versailles. The first of July we bivouacked near a

beautiful place called Meudon. One could see by the gardens, the orchards surrounded with walls, the great size of the houses, and their well-kept appearance, that we were in the environs of the most beautiful city in the world; and yet we were living in the midst of misery and danger, and our hearts bled within us. The people were kind, and loved the soldiers; they called us defenders of our country, and the poorest would have been ready to fight by our side.

The first of July we marched out of our position at eleven o'clock at night to go to Saint Cloud, which consists of palace upon palace, garden upon garden, great trees and magnificent avenues—everything beautiful that can be imagined. At six o'clock we went away from Saint Cloud to go back and take up a position at Vaugirard. Terrible rumours were running through the town. The Emperor had gone away to Rochefort. People said—

“The King of Rome is coming back. Louis XVIII. is on his way.”

Nothing was known in this town, where everything ought to have been known at once.

At Vaugirard the enemy advanced to attack us at about one o'clock in the afternoon, in the environs of the village of Issy. We fought till midnight for our capital. The people helped us, and carried off our wounded under the fire of the Prussians; and the women had pity on us.

It is impossible to say what we suffered at being brought to this. I have seen even Buche shed tears, because we were in a manner dishonoured. I should have been glad to be spared the sight of that. Twelve days before I had not pictured to myself France as it

was. When I saw Paris, with its steeples and its innumerable palaces, extending as far as the horizon, I thought—

“This is France! This is what our ancestors have been heaping up for hundreds and hundreds of years. What a misfortune to think that the Prussians and English should get so far as this!”

At four o'clock in the morning we attacked the Prussians with fresh fury, and we took back the positions that had been lost the day before. Then it was that our generals came and announced a suspension of hostilities to us. These things occurred on the third of July, 1815. We thought that this suspension of hostilities was ordered to announce to the enemy that if he did not retire France would rise, as it had done in 1792, and crush him! We had similar ideas; and I, seeing that the people backed us, remembered the general levies of which Father Goulden had told me.

Unhappily a great many were so tired of Napoleon and his soldiers, that they sacrificed the country itself to be quit of them; they put all the blame upon the Emperor, and said that but for him the others would not have had the strength or the courage to come, that they had exhausted us, and that the Prussians themselves would give us more liberty.

The people talked like Mons. Goulden, but had neither arms nor cartridges; pikes had been made for them.

And as we were thinking on these things, the next day they announced the armistice to us, according to which the Prussians and the English were to occupy the barriers of Paris, and the French army was to retire behind the Loire.

Then the indignation of all honest men became so great, that anger made us furious; some broke their muskets, others tore up their uniforms, and every one cried out—

“We are betrayed! We are delivered up!”

The old officers stood there, pale as death. The tears ran down over their cheeks. No one could appease us. We had fallen to less than nothing—we were a conquered people!

In two thousand years they will still be telling that Paris was taken by the Prussians and the English. It is an eternal disgrace; but the disgrace does not rest upon us.

The battalion started from Vaugirard at five in the afternoon, to go and bivouac at Montrouge. When we saw that the march towards the Loire was beginning, every man said to himself—

“What are we, then? Are we bound to obey the Prussians? Because the Prussians want to see us on the other bank of the Loire, are we forced to obey? No, no; this cannot go on. Since we are betrayed—well, let us go. All this no longer concerns us. We have done our duty. We will not obey Blucher!”

And that same evening the desertions began. All the soldiers went off, some to the right, some to the left; men in blouses and poor old women wanted to lead us away into their innumerable streets, and to try to console us; but we did not want consolation. I said to Buche—

“Let us leave all this—let us go back to Phalsbourg and to Harberg. Let us take up our own trades again, and live like honest folks. If the Austrians, the Prussians, or the Russians come there, the mountaineers and



the townspeople will know how to defend themselves. We shall not want great battles to exterminate thousands upon thousands of them. Forward !”

We were some fifteen Lorrainers in the battalion; we went away together from Montrouge, where the headquarters were, and passed through Ivry and Bercy, which are very beautiful places; but sorrow prevented us from seeing a quarter of what we ought to have looked at. Some still wore their uniforms, others only their great-coats, and others had bought a blouse.

Behind Saint Mandé, quite near a wood, where one sees high towers on the left, and which they told us was called Vincennes, we at last found the road to Strasbourg. It was on the morning of the 6th, and from this place we regularly made our twelve leagues a day.

On the 8th of July we already knew that Louis XVIII. was coming home, and that Monseigneur the Count of Artois would save his soul. All the carriages, post-chaises, and diligences already displayed the white flag. In all the villages through which we passed they were singing the *Te Deum*. The mayors and deputies praised and glorified the Lord for the return of Louis the Well-beloved.

Some vagabonds, when they saw us pass by, called us Bonapartists, and even set their dogs at us. But I would rather not speak of that, as such people are a disgrace to human nature. We only answered by looks of contempt, which rendered them still more insolent and furious. Many of us lifted up our sticks as if to say—

“If we had you in a corner you would be as tame as lambs,”

But the gendarmes backed up these kind of Pinacles ; in three or four places the outcries of the bad fellows caused us to be stopped. The gendarmes came and demanded our papers ; they carried us before the mayor, and the rascals made us cry, " Vive le Roi ! "

It was really abominable ; the old soldiers let themselves be led off to prison rather than utter the required cry. Buche wanted to follow their example, but I said to him—

" What does it matter to us if we cry, ' Vive Jean Claude ! ' or ' Vive Jean Nicolas ? ' All these kings and emperors, old and new, would not give a single hair of their heads to save our lives ; and why should we let ourselves be massacred for the sake of one cry or another ? No ; that makes no difference to us. If people are so foolish, as we are not the strongest, we must satisfy them. Some day they will be crying something else, and later still another cry will be raised. Everything changes—good sense and a good heart are the only things that remain unchanged."

Buche would not understand this reasoning ; but when the gendarmes came we obeyed all the same.

In proportion as we advanced one or the other of our company broke off, and remained behind in his village, so that, when we had passed Toul, Buche and I only were left.

It fell to our share to see the saddest spectacle of all—namely, crowds of Germans and Russians masters of Lorraine and Alsace. We saw them exercising at Lunéville, Blamont, and Sarrebourg, with oak-twigs in their ugly shakos. What a wretched feeling it was to see savages like those living and stuffing themselves at the expense of our peasants ! Ah ! Father Goulden was in

the right when he said that warlike glory costs dear! All I hope is that the Lord will deliver us from them for ever and ever.

At last, on the 16th of July, 1815, towards eleven o'clock in the morning, we arrived at Mittelbronn, the last village on the ridge before Phalsbourg. The blockade had been raised since the armistice, but Cossacks, landwehrmen, and Kaiserlichs filled all the country; they still had their batteries posted around the place, but there was no more firing; the gates of the town were open, and the people came out to reap the harvest.

There was great need to save the corn and rye, for no one can imagine what the misery was with so many useless beings to feed, who denied themselves nothing, and wanted to have schnaps and bacon every day.

In front of all the doors, at all the windows, were to be seen snub noses, long dirty yellow beards, white coats full of vermin, and flat shakos. The fellows looked at you as they smoked their pipes in drunken idleness. We had to work for them, and in the end respectable people had to give them two milliards of money to induce them to go away.

How many things we might have had to say about all these idlers from Russia and Germany, if we had not done ten times more in their country! But it is better that each man should make his own reflections, and imagine the rest.

In front of Heitz's inn I said to Buche—

“Come in—my legs are failing me.”

Mother Heitz, who in those days was still a young woman, was already crying, with hands upraised—

“Ah, good heavens! it's Monsieur Joseph Bertha! Good heavens! what a surprise for the town!”

Then I went in and sat down, and leant over the table to weep at my ease. Mother Heitz ran to get a bottle of wine from the cellar. I also heard Buche sobbing in a corner. Neither of us was able to speak, when we thought of the joy of our relations; the sight of the country had overcome us, and we were glad to think that our bones would one day rest in the cemetery of our village.

Meanwhile, we should soon embrace those who were dearest to us in the world.

When we had recovered ourselves a little, I said to Buche—

“You shall go out first. I shall follow you at a distance, so that my wife and Mons. Goulden may not be too much surprised. You must first of all tell them that you met me unhurt the day after the battle; then say that you met me again in the environs of Paris, and even on the road; and at last you are to say—‘I think he is not far off, and that he will come presently.’ Do you understand?”

“Yes, I understand,” he replied, as he rose after emptying his glass, “and I shall do the same thing for my grandmother, who loves me more than the other kids. I shall send some one before me.”

He went out directly, and I waited a few moments; Mother Heitz was speaking to me, but I did not listen to her; I was thinking how far Buche might already have got; I saw him mentally in the outskirts, by the glacis, under the gate. All at once I rushed away, crying out—“Mother Heitz, I shall pay you another time!”

And I set off running. I have a dim remembrance of being recognised by three or four persons, who cried out—

“Why, it’s Joseph Bertha!”

But I am not quite sure of this. All at once, without knowing how, I was running up the common staircase of our house, and then I heard a general cry. Catharine was in my arms! My head seemed in a certain way confused, and it was not until the next moment that I awoke as it were from a dream, and saw the room, Mons. Goulden, Jean Buche, and Catharine, and then I fell sobbing at such a rate, one would have thought the greatest misfortune had happened to me. Mons. Goulden stood silent, and so did Buche. I held Catharine on my knees, as I sat, and embraced her; she also wept. After a long time I cried out—

“Ah, Mons. Goulden, forgive me! I should have embraced you before. Come, my father, whom I love as I love myself!”

“It is well, Joseph,” he answered with emotion. “I know it—I am not jealous.”

He stood wiping his eyes.

“Yes, yes, love one’s family, and then one’s friends—it is natural, my child—don’t be uneasy.”

Then I arose and clasped him to my heart.

The first words Catharine said to me were—

“Joseph, I knew that you would come back; I had put my confidence in God! Now our greatest miseries are over, and we shall always remain together.”

I had made her sit down on my knees again; her arm was on my shoulder. I looked at her, and she cast down her eyes and turned pale; what we had hoped for before my departure had come to pass. We were very happy!

Mons. Goulden stood near the work-table and smiled; John, standing by the door, said—

"Now I must go, Joseph. I am going to Harberg: my father and my grandmother expect me."

He held out his hand to me, and I kept it in mine, and said—"John, stay; you must dine with us."

Mons. Goulden and Catharine also pressed him, but he would not wait. When I embraced him on the staircase, I felt that I loved him as a brother.

He came back very often afterwards; every time he came to the town during thirty years, he used always to stay with me. Now he sleeps behind the church at Hommert. He was a brave man—a good-hearted man. But what am I thinking of?

I must bring this story to an end, and I have said nothing yet about Aunt Grethel, who arrived an hour afterwards. Oh, how she lifted up her hands, and how she hugged me, crying—

"Joseph! Joseph! Here you are—you've escaped it all! Let them come and take you away from us again—let them only try! Ah, how sorry I have been that I let you go! How I have cursed the conscription, and all the rest of it! But you are back again, and all is well—all is well! The Lord has had pity on us!"

Yes, all that, all these old histories, when one thinks of them, make the tears come into one's eyes; it's like a vision—a dream of things forgotten years and years ago, and yet it is life. These joys and sorrows that we remember are the only things that bind us to earth, and prevent us, when we get very old and our forces fail, and our eyes grow dim and we are but the shadow of ourselves, from wishing to be gone, and saying—"Enough of this!"

These old remembrances always remain alive; when

we speak of our old dangers, we seem to be among them still; we speak of our old friends, and think we are still pressing their hands; of the woman we loved, and think when we look at her that she is still beautiful. And that which appeared to us just, honest, and wise in the old times, is honest, just, and wise still.

I remember—and with this I must end this long history—that after my return, for some months and even years, a great sadness was diffused among the various families, and that people dared not speak frankly to one another, or utter their wishes for the glory of the country. Zebedee himself, who came back with those who had leave granted them behind the Loire—Zebedee himself had lost heart. This arose from the vengeance taken, the shootings, massacres, and punishments of all kinds; it arose from our humiliation; from the hundred and fifty thousand Germans, Englishmen, and Russians placed in garrison in our fortresses; from the war indemnities, the millions of returned emigrants, the forced contributions, and principally from the laws against suspected persons, against profanity, and from the old rights they wanted to re-establish.

All these things, which were contrary to good sense, contrary to the honour of the nation, the accusations made by such people as Pinacle, and the wrongs the old revolutionists were made to suffer—all these things at last made people gloomy; and often, when we were alone with Catharine and little Joseph, whom God had sent to us to console us amid these great misfortunes, Mons. Goulden, after sitting in deep thought, would say to me—

“Joseph, our unhappy country is brought very low!

When Napoleon took France into his hands, she was the greatest the freest, the most powerful of nations; all the others admired and envied us! But now we are vanquished, ruined, and bled to exhaustion; the enemy fills our fortresses, and has got his foot on our throat. We see what has never been seen since France existed—the stranger master of our capital! We have seen this twice within two years! That's what one pays for putting one's liberty, fortune, and honour in the hands of an ambitious man! Yes, we are in a very unfortunate position; one would think that our great revolution is dead, and that the rights of man have perished! Well, we must not be despondent—all this will pass by! Those who march against justice and liberty will be driven away; those who want to re-establish privileges and titles will be looked upon as madmen. The great nation is resting, she is pondering on her faults, and watching those who want to lead her away from her interests. She can read to the bottom of their souls; and in spite of Swiss Guards, in spite of the Royal Guard, in spite of the Holy Alliance, when she is weary of her misery, she may turn out these people any day. And then it will be over, for France desires liberty, equality, and justice! The only thing we want is instruction; but the people are gaining knowledge every day, and profiting by our experience and our misfortunes. I shall, perhaps, not have the happiness of seeing the waking up of my country; I am too old to hope for such a thing; but you will see it, and the spectacle will console you for everything; you will be proud of belonging to that generous nation, which has advanced far beyond others, since 1789; its haltings are only moments of rest, during a long journey."



And the good man, to his last hour, preserved his calmness and his confidence.

And I have seen the fulfilment of his words. I have seen the return of the flag of liberty; I have seen the nation increasing in wealth, happiness, and instruction; I have seen those who wished to arrest the course of justice and re-establish the old régime forced to flee away; and I see that the human mind is continually progressive, and that the peasants would give their last shirt to put their children forward. Unfortunately, we have not schoolmasters enough. Ah, if we had fewer soldiers and more schoolmasters, everything would go on much more quickly. But patience—it will come. The people begin to understand their rights; they know that war only brings increase of taxation; and as to-day the people are masters, who will dare to assert the contrary, when they say, “Instead of sending our sons to perish by thousands beneath the sabre and the cannon, we will have them taught, and made men of?”

In this hope I bid you farewell, my friends, and I embrace you with all my heart.





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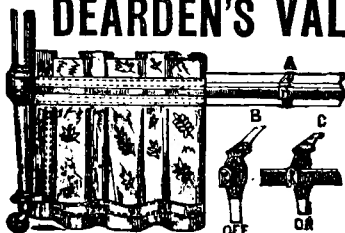
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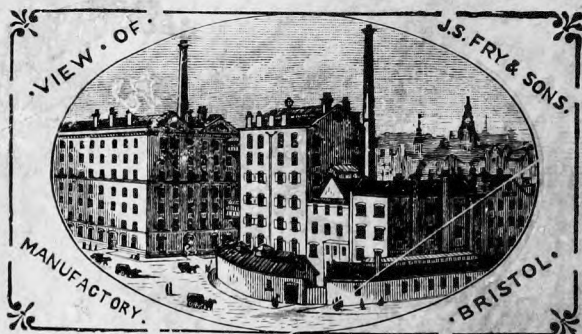
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